

Poems

'He is gone' by David Harkins

(can be adapted to female i.e she her)

You can shed tears that he is gone,
or you can smile because he has lived.
You can close your eyes and pray that he'll come back,
or you can open your eyes and see all he's left.
Your heart can be empty because you can't see him,
or you can be full of the love you shared.
You can turn your back on tomorrow and live yesterday,
or you can be happy for tomorrow because of yesterday.
You can remember only that he is gone,
or you can cherish his memory and let it live on.
You can cry and close your mind, be empty and turn your back.
Or you can do what he'd want:
smile, open your eyes, love and go on.

'Remember me' by Anthony Dowson

Speak of me as you have always done.
Remember the good times, laughter, and fun.

Share the happy memories we've made.
Do not let them wither or fade.

I'll be with you in the summer's sun
And when the winter's chill has come.

I'll be the voice that whispers in the breeze.
I'm peaceful now, put your mind at ease.

I've rested my eyes and gone to sleep,
But memories we've shared are yours to keep.

Sometimes our final days may be a test,
But remember me when I was at my best.

Although things may not be the same,
Don't be afraid to use my name.

Let your sorrow last for just a while.
Comfort each other and try to smile.

I've lived a life filled with joy and fun.
Live on now, make me proud of what you'll become.

Poems

'Remember me' by Margaret Mead

To the living, I am gone.
To the sorrowful, I will never return.
To the angry, I was cheated.
But to the happy, I am at peace.
And to the faithful, I have never left.
I cannot be seen, but I can be heard.
So as you stand upon a shore, gazing at a beautiful sea – remember me.
As you look in awe at a mighty forest and its grand majesty – remember me.
As you look upon a flower and admire its simplicity – remember me.
Remember me in your heart, your thoughts, your memories of the times we loved, the
times we cried, the times we fought, the times we laughed.
For if you think of me, I will never be gone.

'Remember me' by Christina Rossetti

Remember me when I am gone away,
Gone far away into the silent land;
When you can no more hold me by the hand,
Nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.
Remember me when no more day by day
You tell me of our future that you planned:
Only remember me; you understand
It will be late to counsel then or pray.
Yet if you should forget me for a while
And afterwards remember, do not grieve:
For if the darkness and corruption leave
A vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
Better by far you should forget and smile
Than that you should remember and be sad.

'Let me go' by Christina Rossetti

When I come to the end of the road
And the sun has set for me
I want no rites in a gloom filled room
Why cry for a soul set free?

Miss me a little, but not for long
And not with your head bowed low
Remember the love that once we shared
Miss me, but let me go.

For this is a journey we all must take
And each must go alone.
It's all part of the master plan
A step on the road to home.

When you are lonely and sick at heart
Go to the friends we know.
Laugh at all the things we used to do
Miss me, but let me go.

Poems

'Do not stand at my grave and weep' by Mary Elizabeth Frye

Do not stand at my grave and weep.
I am not there. I do not sleep.
I am a thousand winds that blow.
I am the diamond glints on snow.
I am the sunlight on ripened grain.
I am the gentle autumn rain.
When you awaken in the morning's hush
I am the swift uplifting rush
Of quiet birds in circled flight.
I am the soft stars that shine at night.
Do not stand at my grave and cry;
I am not there. I did not die.

'In the garden at dusk' by Joyce Grenfell

In the cool of the garden when the evening draws in
Serenity waits where the shadows begin
In the fragrance of dusk and the murmur of clover
The concerns that we carried pass peacefully over
Flowers in their fullness shed blessings about
And the turmoil of living fades quietly out
Hope glimmers through each evening star
And our cares will shrink to the size that they are.

'After glow' by Amelia Josephine Barr

I'd like the memory of me to be a happy one.
I'd like to leave an after glow of smiles when life is done.
I'd like to leave an echo, whispering softly down the ways,
Of happy times and laughing times and bright and sunny days.
I'd like the tears of those who grieve, to dry before the sun.
Of happy memories that I leave when life is done.

'Still' by Char Marks

Listen. There is this silence now. This stillness.
Gradually we will get used to it. But, for now,
It is strange. You have left such a gap.
Our world is in shock, holding its breath
But listen closer – all your laughter, all your love
is still ringing out. Still holding us.
All our memories of you are still with us.
All the love we shared is still in every one of us.
And although we ache from this loss of you,
you will always be here – as still and steady,
and fierce, as any star.
Look. You are shining
bright through all our skies.
We thank you
for sharing your life with us.

Poems

'I'd like to think' by Edgar A Guest

I'd like to think when life is done
That I had filled a needed post
That here and there I'd paid my fare
With more than idle talk and boast
That I had taken gifts divine
The breath of life and manhood free
And tried to use them now and then
In service to my fellow man.

'What is success?' by Ralph Waldo Emerson

What is success?
To laugh often and much;
To win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children;
To earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends;
To appreciate the beauty;
To find the best in others;
To leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition;
To know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived.
This is to have succeeded!

'A poem' by Ewan McColl (taken from the lyrics of Joy of Living)

Take me to some high place
Of heather, rock or ling
Scatter my dust and ashes
Feed me to the wind
So that I will be
Part of all you see
The air you are breathing

I'll be part of the curlew's cry
And the soring hawk
The blue milkwort
And the sundew hung with diamonds

I'll be riding the gentle wind
That blows through your hair
Reminding you of how we shared
In the joy of living

Poems

Author unknown

Have faith in love and do not fear the sadness
that comes when someone has gone away,
for love is deeper than the deepest sorrow,
its light can reach beyond the darkest day.

Have faith in love for love is sure and constant;
A tie too strong for time and loss to sever.
And for those who love there are no final partings,
Where love has been there love will be forever.

'When I am gone' by Lyman Hancock

When I come to the end of my journey,
And I travel my last weary mile.
Just forget if you can, that I ever frowned
And remember only my smile.

Forget unkind words I have spoken:
Remember some good I have done.
Forget that I ever had heartache
And remember I've had loads of fun.

Forget that I've stumbled and blundered
And sometimes fell by the way.
Remember I have fought some hard battles
And won, ere the close of the day.

Then forget to grieve for my going,
I would not have you for a day,
But in summer just gather some flowers
And remember the place where I lay.

And come in the shade of the evening
When the sun paints the sky in the west
Stand for a few moments beside me
And remember only my best.

From a Sympathy card

Memories are special, recall them everyday.
They're always there within your heart and cannot fly away.
Remember all the special times you shared throughout the years.
And those memories of happiness will wipe away the tears.

Poems

'I'm there within your heart' Author unknown

Right now I'm in a different place,
And though we seem apart,
I'm closer than I ever was,
I'm there within your heart.

I'm with you when you greet each day,
And while the sun shines bright,
I'm there to share the sunsets too,
I'm with you every night.

I'm with you when the times are good
To share a laugh or two.
And if a tear should start to fall,
I'll still be there for you.

And when the day arrives
That we no longer are apart,
I'll smile and hold you close to me,
Forever on my heart

'My funeral' by Wendy Cope

I hope I can trust you, friends, not to use our relationship
As an excuse for an unsolicited ego-trip.
I have seen enough of them at funerals and they make me cross.
At this one, though deceased, I aim to be the boss.
If you are asked to talk about me for five minutes, please do not go on for eight.
There is a strict timetable at the crematorium and nobody wants to be late.
If invited to read a poem, just read the bloody poem. If requested
To sing a song, just sing it, as suggested,
And don't say anything. Though I will not be there,
Glancing pointedly at my watch and fixing the speaker with a malevolent stare.
Remember that this was how I always reacted
When I felt that anybody's speech, sermon or poetry reading was becoming too
protracted.
Yes, I was intolerant, and not always polite
And if there aren't many people at my funeral, it will serve me right.

Poems

'I will not die an unlived life' by Dawna Markova

I will not die an unlived life.
I will not live in fear
of falling or catching fire.
I choose to inhabit my days,
to allow my living to open me,
to make me less afraid,
more accessible;
to loosen my heart
until it becomes a wing,
a torch, a promise.
I choose to risk my significance,
to live so that which came to me as seed
goes to the next as blossom,
and that which came to me as blossom,
goes on as fruit.

'Instruction' by Arnold Compton

When I have moved beyond you in the adventure of life,
Gather in some pleasant place and there remember me
With spoken words, old and new.

Let a tear fall if you will, but let a smile come quickly
For I have loved the laughter of life.
Do not linger too long with your solemnities.

Go eat and talk, and when you can,
Follow a woodland trail, climb a high mountain,
Sleep beneath the stars, swim a cold river,
Chew the thoughts of some book
Which challenges your soul.

Use your hands some bright day
To make a thing of beauty
Or to lift someone's heavy load.
Though you mention not my name,
Though no thought of me crosses your mind,
I shall be with you.
For these have been the realities of my life for me.

And when you face some crisis with anguish,
When you walk alone with courage,
When you choose your path of right,
When you give yourself in love,
I shall be very close to you.

I have followed the valleys,
I have climbed the heights of life.

Poems

'I think of you' by Humanist Celebrant Christopher Geake

I think of you as I gently drift into sleep at the end of the day.
When I wake in the darkness of the night,
I think of you.
As the new day begins,
I think of you.
Many times through the day,
distracted from my tasks and concerns,
I think of you.
As I depart this life, I shall be thinking of you.
And though you left before me,
you will live, as long as I live,
as I lovingly think of you and all you meant to me.
That's why, in everything I do,
I think of you.

'I am there' by Iris Hesselden

Look for me when the tide is high
And the gulls are wheeling overhead
When the autumn wind sweeps the cloudy sky
And one by one the leaves are shed
Look for me when the trees are bare
And the stars are bright in the frosty sky
When the morning mist hangs on the air
And shorter darker days pass by.

I am there, where the river flows
And salmon leap to a silver moon
Where the insects hum and the tall grass grows
And sunlight warms the afternoon
I am there in the busy street
I take your hand in the city square
In the market place where the people meet
In your quiet room - I am there

I am the love you cannot see
And all I ask is - look for me

Poems

'The road not taken' by Robert Frost

Two roads diverged in a yellow wood,
And sorry I could not travel both
And be one traveller, long I stood
And looked down one as far as I could
To where it bent in the undergrowth;

Then took the other, as just as fair,
And having perhaps the better claim,
Because it was grassy and wanted wear;
Though as for that the passing there
Had worn them really about the same,

And both that morning equally lay
In leaves no step had trodden black.
Oh, I kept the first for another day!
Yet knowing how way leads on to way,
I doubted if I should ever come back.

I shall be telling this with a sigh
Somewhere ages and ages hence:
Two roads diverged in a wood, and I
I took the one less travelled by,
And that has made all the difference.

'Weep not for me' Author unknown

Weep not for me though I have gone
Into that gentle night
Grieve if you will, but not for long
Upon my soul's sweet flight

I am at peace, my soul's at rest
There is no need for tears
For with your love I was so blessed
For all those many years

There is no pain, I suffer not
The fear is now all gone
Put now these things out of your thoughts
In your memory, I live on

Remember not my fight for breath
Remember not the strife
Please do not dwell upon my death
But celebrate my life

Poems

'One at rest' Author unknown

Think of me as one at rest,
for me you should not weep
I have no pain, no troubled thoughts
for I am just asleep.

The living thinking me that was,
is now forever still
And life goes on without me now,
as time forever will.

If your heart is heavy now
because I've gone away
Dwell not long upon it friend
For none of us can stay.

Those of you who liked me,
I sincerely thank you all
And those of you who loved me,
I thank you most of all.

And in my fleeting lifespan,
as time went rushing by
I found some time to hesitate,
to laugh, to love, to cry.

Matters it now if time began
If time will ever cease?
I was here, I used it all,
and now I am at peace.

'What will matter' by Michael Josephson

Live a life that matters.
Ready or not, someday it will all come to an end.
There will be no more sunrises, no minutes, hours or days.
The wins and losses that once seemed so important will fade away.
It won't matter where you came from, or on what side of the tracks you lived, at the end.
It won't matter whether you were beautiful or brilliant
Even your gender and skin colour will be irrelevant.
So what will matter?
How will the value of your days be measured?
What will matter is not what you bought, but what you built; not what you got, but what you gave.
What will matter is not what you learned, but what you taught.
What will matter is not your memories, but the memories that live in those who loved you.
What will matter is how long you will be remembered, by whom and for what.
Living a life that matters doesn't happen by accident.
It's not a matter of circumstance, but of choice.
Choose to live a life that matters.

Poems

'It couldn't be done' by Edgar Guest

Somebody said that it couldn't be done
But he with a chuckle replied
That 'maybe it couldn't,' but he would be one
Who wouldn't say so till he'd tried.
So he buckled right in with the trace of a grin
On his face. If he worried he hid it.
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it!
Somebody scoffed: 'Oh, you'll never do that;
At least no one ever has done it;'
But he took off his coat and he took off his hat
And the first thing we knew he'd begun it.
With a lift of his chin and a bit of a grin,
Without any doubting or quiddit,
He started to sing as he tackled the thing
That couldn't be done, and he did it.
There are thousands to tell you it cannot be done,
There are thousands to prophesy failure,
There are thousands to point out to you, one by one
The dangers that wait to assail you.
But just buckle in with a bit of a grin,
Just take off your coat and go to it;
Just start in to sing as you tackle the thing
That 'cannot be done,' and you'll do it.

'You Meant So Much' by Cassie Mitchell

You meant so much to all of us
You were special and that's no lie
You brightened up the darkest day
And the cloudiest sky

Your smile alone warmed hearts
Your laugh was like music to hear
I would give absolutely anything
To have you well and standing near

Not a second passes
When you're not on our minds
Your love we will never forget
The hurt will ease in time

Many tears I have seen and cried
They have all poured out like rain
I know that you are happy now
And no longer in any pain.

Poems

'Funeral Blues' by W H Auden

Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone,
Prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone,
Silence the pianos and with muffled drum
Bring out the coffin, let the mourners come.

Let aeroplanes circle moaning overhead
Scribbling on the sky the message He Is Dead,
Put crepe bows round the white necks of the public doves,
Let the traffic policemen wear black cotton gloves.

He was my North, my South, my East and West,
My working week and my Sunday rest,
My noon, my midnight, my talk, my song;
I thought that love would last for ever: I was wrong.

The stars are not wanted now: put out every one;
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun;
Pour away the ocean and sweep up the wood;
For nothing now can ever come to any good.

'Autumn' by Rainer Maria Rilke

The leaves are falling, falling as from far off,
as though far gardens withered in the skies;
they are falling with denying gestures.

And in the nights the heavy earth is falling
from all the stars down into loneliness.

We are all falling. This hand falls.
And look at others; it is in them all.

And yet there is One who holds this falling
endlessly gently in his hands.

'If I should go' by Joyce Grenfell

If I should go before the rest of you
Break not a flower nor inscribe a stone
Nor when I'm gone speak in a Sunday voice
But be the usual selves that I have known
Weep if you must
Parting is hell
But life goes on
So sing as well

Poems

'Death Is Nothing At All' by Henry Scott-Holland

Death is nothing at all.
It does not count.
I have only slipped away into the next room.
Nothing has happened.

Everything remains exactly as it was.
I am I, and you are you,
and the old life that we lived so fondly together is untouched, unchanged.
Whatever we were to each other, that we are still.

Call me by the old familiar name.
Speak of me in the easy way which you always used.
Put no difference into your tone.
Wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow.

Laugh as we always laughed at the little jokes that we enjoyed together.
Play, smile, think of me.
Let my name be ever the household word that it always was.
Let it be spoken without an effort, without the ghost of a shadow upon it.

Life means all that it ever meant.
It is the same as it ever was.
There is absolute and unbroken continuity.
What is this death but a negligible accident?

Why should I be out of mind because I am out of sight?
I am but waiting for you, for an interval,
somewhere very near,
just round the corner.

All is well.
Nothing is hurt; nothing is lost.
One brief moment and all will be as it was before.
How we shall laugh at the trouble of parting when we meet again!

'A Life Well Lived' Author Unknown

A life well lived is a precious gift
Of hope and strength and grace,
From someone who has made our world
A brighter, better place
It's filled with moments, sweet and sad
With smiles and sometimes tears,
With friendships formed and good times shared
And laughter through the years.
A life well lived is a legacy
Of joy and pride and pleasure,
A living, lasting memory
Our grateful hearts will treasure

Poems

'We Saw You Getting Tired' by Frances and Kathleen Coelho

(adapted from God Saw You Getting Tired)

We saw you getting tired
And a cure was not to be –
So I put my arms around you
And whispered, you're safe with me.

With tearful eyes I watched you suffer
And saw you fade away –
Although I loved you dearly
I could not make you stay.

A golden heart stopped beating
Your beautiful smile at rest –
Life broke my heart that day
When time took one of the best.

It's lonesome here without you
I miss you so each day –
My life just isn't the same
Ever since you went away.

When days are sad and lonely
And everything goes wrong –
I imagine you gently whispering,
Cheer up and carry on.

Each time I see your picture
You seem to smile and say –
Don't cry, I live on in your heart
And will do every day.

'Sentiments of Grief' by Lisa Lopresti

Only in loss,
do we understand value.

Tears are the words,
we cannot speak,

of the pain and shock of what has
happened and the loss of whatever will.

Our mourning is our love,
unable to reach you.

We miss the future,
you were supposed to have.

Our grief changes over time,
but never will it end.

Poems

'The Dash' by Linda Ellis

I read of a man who stood to speak
At the funeral of a friend

He referred to the dates on her tombstone
From the beginning to the end

He noted that first came her date of her birth
And spoke the following date with tears,

But she said what mattered most of all
Was the dash between those years

For that dash represents all the time
That she spent alive on earth.

And now only those who loved her
Know what that little line is worth.

For it matters not how much we own;
The cars, the house, the cash,

What matters is how we live and love
And how we spend our dash.

So think about this long and hard.
Are there things you'd like to change?

For you never know how much time is left,
That can still be rearranged.

If we could just slow down enough
To consider what's true and real

And always try to understand
The way other people feel.

And be less quick to anger,
And show appreciation more

And love the people in our lives
Like we've never loved before.

If we treat each other with respect,
And more often wear a smile

Remembering that this special dash
Might only last a little while.

So, when your eulogy is being read
With your life's actions to rehash

Would you be proud of the things they say
About how you spent your dash?

Poems

'Farewell, Sweet Dust' by Elinor Wylie

Now I have lost you, I must scatter
All of you on the air henceforth;
Not that to me it can ever matter
But it's only fair to the rest of the earth.
Now especially, when it is winter
And the sun's not half as bright as it was,
Who wouldn't be glad to find a splinter
That once was you, in the frozen grass?
Snowflakes, too, will be softer feathered,
Clouds, perhaps, will be whiter plumed;
Rain, whose brilliance you caught and gathered,
Purer silver have resumed.
Farewell, sweet dust; I never was a miser:
Once, for a minute, I made you mine:
Now you are gone, I am none the wiser
But the leaves of the willow are as bright as wine.

'The Family Tree' Author Unknown

A limb has fallen from the family tree.
I keep hearing a voice that says, 'Grieve not for me'.
Remember the best times, The laughter, the song.
The good life I lived while I was strong.
Continue my heritage, I'm counting on you.
Keep smiling and surely the sun will shine through.

My mind is at ease, my soul is at rest.
Remembering all, how I truly was blessed.
Continue traditions, no matter how small.
Go on with your life, don't worry about falls
I miss you all dearly, so keep up your chin.
Until the day we're together again.

Poems

'My Memory Library' by Sarah Blackstone

Imagine if I was given one moment,
just a single slice of my past.
I could hold it close forever,
and that moment would always last.

I'd put the moment in a safe,
within my heart's abode.
I could open it when I wanted,
and only I would know the code.

I could choose a time of laughing,
a time of happiness and fun.
I could choose a time that tried me
through everything I've done.

I sat and thought about what moment
would always make me smile.
One that would always push me
to walk that extra mile.

If I'm feeling sad and low,
if I'm struggling with what to do,
I can go and open my little safe
and watch my moment through.

There are moments I can think of
that would lift my spirits every time.
The moments when you picked me up,
when the road was hard to climb.

For me to only pick one moment
to cherish, save and keep
is proving really difficult,
as I've gathered up a heap!

I've dug deep inside my heart,
found the safe and looked inside
There was room for lots of moments;
in fact, hundreds if I tried.

I'm building my own little library,
embedded in my heart,
for all the moments spent with you
before you had to part.

I can open it up whenever I like,
pick a moment and watch it through,
My little library acts as a promise
I'll never ever forget you.

Poems

'Do not go gentle into that good night' by Dylan Thomas

Do not go gentle into that good night,
Old age should burn and rave at close of day;
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,
Because their words had forked no lightning they
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright
Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,
And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,
Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight
Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,
Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.
Do not go gentle into that good night.
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

'They sit together on the porch' by Wendell Berry

They sit together on the porch, the dark
Almost fallen, the house behind them dark.
Their supper done with, they have washed and dried
The dishes—only two plates now, two glasses,
Two knives, two forks, two spoons—small work for two.
She sits with her hands folded in her lap,
At rest. They do not speak,
And when they speak at last it is to say
What each one knows the other knows. They have
One mind between them, now, that finally
For all its knowing will not exactly know
Which one goes first through the dark doorway, bidding
Goodnight, and which sits on a while alone.

Poems

Tree sensibility

IFOR AP GLYN

BARDD CENEDLAETHOL CYMRU / NATIONAL POET OF WALES

Commissioned by the Welsh Government to mark their announcement that three commemorative woodlands would be planted in memory of those lost to COVID in Wales.

What are our lives, but showers of leaves?

And last year an autumn, grindingly long...

Today, sharp sunlight
of not-quite-spring
bleaches birch skeletons
against a sky painfully blue.
And we come here,
trampling the triggers of fallen twigs...
then, we grow still,
as we breathe with the trees...

A leaf will fall;
twisting and flaunting;
we join its orbits gently,
swimming in memories.

We can be made whole
here, in this 'thin place',
between clay-bound roots and wind-bound boughs,
between body and soul...

And the oaks will soon
sail on their seasons,
unfurling their glory
through churches of green,
sieving the sun
into the shadows below,

and our grief will wear new colours,
as it must...

Poems

'I Heard Your Voice In the Wind Today' Author unknown

I heard your voice in the wind today
and I turned to see your face.
The warmth of the wind caressed me
as I stood silently in place.

I felt your touch in the sun today
as its warmth filled the sky.
I closed my eyes for your embrace
and my spirit soared high.

I saw your eyes in the windowpane
as I watched the falling rain.
It seemed as each raindrop fell
it quietly said your name.

I held you close in my heart today
it made me feel complete.
You may have died.... but you are not gone
you will always be a part of me.

As long as the sun shines...
the wind blows...
the rain falls...
You will live on inside of me forever
for that is all my heart knows.

Poems

'There are no boring people in this world' by Yevgeny Yevtushenko.

There are no boring people in this world.
Each fate is like the history of a planet.
And no two planets are alike at all.
Each is distinct – you simply can't compare it.

If someone lived without attracting notice
and made a friend of their obscurity –
then their uniqueness was precisely this.
Their very plainness made them interesting.

Each person has a world that's all their own.
Each of those worlds must have its finest moment
and each must have its hour of bitter torment –
and yet, to us, both hours remain unknown.

When people die, they do not die alone.
They die along with their first kiss, first combat.
They take away their first day in the snow ...
All gone, all gone – there's just no way to stop it.

There may be much that's fated to remain,
but something – something leaves us all the same.
The rules are cruel, the game nightmarish –
it isn't people but whole worlds that perish.