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Writings Through Grief®

General Loss

Poetry

Doty, Mark. *Atlantis*. HarperPerennial, 1995.

Gander, Forrest. *Be With*. New Directions Books, 2018.

An elegiac collection on loss.

Gunn, Thom. *The Man With Night Sweats*. Faber & Faber, 1992.

Hillman, Brenda. *Death Tractates*. University Press of New England, 1992.

Orr, Gregory. *Concerning The Book That Is The Body Of The Beloved*. Copper Canyon Press, 2005.

Exquisite, “Rumiesque” brief poems on the mysteries of love and loss.

Pastan, Linda. *The Five Stages of Grief*. Norton, 1978.

Young, Kevin, ed. *The Art Of Losing: Poems of Grief & Healing*. Bloomsbury USA, 2010.

A wonderful anthology of grief poems with an index by subject and relationship.

Memoir

Deraniyagala, Sonali. *Wave*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2013.

A narrative of grief after the unimaginable loss of a woman’s husband, children and parents in a tsunami.

Doty, Mark. *Dog Years*. HarperCollins, 2007

A tender, evocative memoir interwoven with reflections on grief and our relationship to animals.

Iyer, Pico. *Autumn Light: Season of Fire and Farewells*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2019.

A meditation on impermanence, mortality, and grief written while living in a small village in Japan.

Lewis, C.S. *A Grief Observed*. Seabury Press, 1963.

A significant contribution to the spiritual questions on grief, this is the story of the death of the author’s wife and his attempt to come to terms with his loss.

Nelson, Maggie. *The Red Parts: Autobiography Of A Trial*. Graywolf Press, 2007.

A story of intergenerational grief and the impact of a murder on a family.

Orr, Gregory. *The Blessing*. Council Oak Books, 2002.

Quindlen, Anna. *Good Dog. Stay*. Random House, 2007.

A tender and humorous reflection on the writer’s relationship with her dying dog, Beau.

Riggs, Nina. *The Bright Hour: A Memoir Of Living And Dying*. Simon & Shuster, 2017.

An excellent memoir of a young woman, wife and mother living with metastatic breast cancer written from the full experience of facing dying with love and grief.



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Rosenblatt, Roger. *Kayak Morning: reflections on love, grief, and small boats*. Harper Collins, 2012.

Kayak as metaphor and the actual; floating meditations on loss and grief.

Straus, Darin. *Half A Life*. McSweeney's, 2010.

Half his life ago, the author accidentally hit a young woman riding her bicycle. This is the story of his struggle to integrate this horrifying experience into his life.

Ward, Jesmyn. *Men We Reaped*. Bloomsbury USA, 2013.

The stories of the lives and losses of several significant young men in the life of a woman from rural Mississippi within the surround of racism.

Fiction

Jacob, Mira. *The Sleepwalker's Guide To Dancing: A Novel*. Random House, 2014.

Interweaving the past with the present, it is the story of an immigrant family living with sorrow and loss.

Jufresa, Laia. Translation by Sophie Hughes. *Umami*. Oneworld Publications, 2016.

A book about community and loss, it interweaves the sometimes whimsical, other times poignant, stories of neighbors living in present day Mexico City.

Kessler, Brad. *Birds In Fall*. Scribner, 2006.

A story using the natural world, myth and metaphor, about family members grieving their loved ones killed in an airplane crash.

Kimmel, Haven. *The Solace Of Leaving Early*. Anchor Books, 2003

A unique novel of love and faith with a through line of grief.

Shreve, Anita. *Light On Snow*. Little, Brown and Company, 2004.

A story of a daughter and her father and their ultimate healing to create a new family.

Anthology

Moffat, Mary Jane. *In The Midst of Winter*. Vintage Books, 1992.

Partner Loss

Poetry

Alegria, Claribel. *Sorrow*. Curbstone Press, 1999.

Gallagher, Tess. *Moon Crossing Bridge*. Graywolf Press, 1992.

A collection of poems of grief and life written after the death of her husband, writer Raymond Carver.



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Gallagher, Tess. *Dear Ghosts*. Graywolf Press, 2006.

More poems years later about grief and life and her own confrontation with cancer.

Gilbert, Jack. *Great Fires*. Knopf/Random House, 1994.

Gilbert, Sandra M. *Ghost Volcano*. Norton, 1995.

Hall, Donald. *Without*. Houghton Mifflin, 1998.

Mendel, Stephanie. *March, before Spring*. O'Brien & Whitaker, 1999.

Monette, Paul. *Love Alone: 18 Elegies for Rog*. St. Martin's Press, 1988.

Oliver, Mary. *Thirst*. Beacon Press, 2006.

A collection of poems published after the death of the poet's life-partner.

Schaffer, Teya. *A Ritual Of Drowning: poems of love and mourning*. Tabor Sarah, 2000.

Sharma, Prageeta. *Grief Sequence*. Wave Books, 2019.

A poet writes of her grief on the illness and death of her husband.

Memoir

Alexander, Elizabeth. *The Light Of The World*. Hachette Book Group, 2015.

In her beautiful poet's prose, Ms. Alexander writes of the love story between her and her husband and of the meaning of loss for her and their two boys.

Ausiello, Michael. *Spoiler Alert: The Hero Dies: A Memoir of Love, Loss, and Other Four-Letter Words*. Atria Paperback, 2017.

A story of gay love, relationship, illness, and loss.

Bayley, John. *Elegy For Iris*. Picador, 1999.

Written by the husband of Iris Murdoch, this book tells the painful story of her descent into Alzheimer's disease.

Bloom, Amy. *In Love: A Memoir of Love and Loss*. Random House, 2022.

A memoir of a couple's relationship and response to Alzheimer's disease.

Butler, Sandra and Rosenblum, Barbara. *Cancer In Two Voices*. Spinsters Ink, 1991.

Coutts, Marion. *The Iceberg*. Grove Atlantic, 2014.

A wonderfully written account of a woman and their young son accompanying her husband through his illness and dying.

Dann, Patty. *The Goldfish Went On Vacation: A Memoir Of Loss (and Learning to Tell the Truth about It.)* Trumpeter Books, 2007.

The story of a woman helping her young son and herself cope with the illness and death of his father.

Didion, Joan. *The Year Of Magical Thinking*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2005.

The account of the well-known writer's first year of grief after the sudden loss of her husband and of the serious illness of her daughter.



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- Doty, Mark. *Heaven's Coast: A Memoir*. HarperCollins, 1996.
A moving, well-written account of the poet's partner's illness and subsequent death due to AIDS.
- Gallagher, Dorothy. *Stories I Forgot to Tell You*. New York Review of Books, 2020.
Stories on marriage, the devastating toll of long-term illness, and grief.
- Gilbert, Sandra M. *Wrongful Death: A Medical Tragedy*. W. W. Norton, 1995.
A detailed account of grief following the death of her husband after routine surgery, and of the traumatic process to discover what happened.
- Green, Karen. *Bough Down*. Siglio Press, 2013.
In poetry, prose, and collage images, this elegy written by the widow of David Foster Wallace expresses all that is impossible to express of grief after a suicide.
- Hall, Donald. *The Best Day The Worst Day: Life With Jane Kenyon*. Houghton Mifflin Company, 2005.
The prose story of the poets Hall and Kenyon: their life together, her illness and her death.
- Henderson, Artis. *Un-remarried Widow*. Simon & Schuster, 2013.
Well written account of the relationship and grief of a young woman and her soldier husband, killed in Iran.
- Jamison, Kay Redfield. *Nothing Was The Same: A Memoir*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2009.
Poignant story of the illness and death of the psychologist's husband. Redfield provides superb subjective descriptions of the differences between clinical depression and grief.
- Lewis, C.S. *A Grief Observed*. Seabury Press, 1963.
A significant contribution to the spiritual questions on grief, this is the story of the death of the author's wife and his attempt to come to terms with his loss.
- Logelin, Matthew. *Two Kisses for Maddy: A Memoir of Loss & Love*. Grand Central Publishing, 2011.
A bittersweet story of the loss of a young wife and the caretaking of an infant daughter.
- Monette, Paul. *Borrowed Time: An AIDS Memoir*. Avon Books, 1990.
- Oates, Joyce Carol. *A Widow's Story*. HarperCollins, 2011.
- Pearl, Mariane. *A Mighty Heart*. Scribner, 2003.
The traumatic account of the Al Qaeda kidnapping and murder of Daniel Pearl written by his wife.
- Roiphe, Anne. *Epilogue: A Memoir*. HarperCollins, 2008.
Thoughtful vignettes of a widow's life after initial grief; how it is to be on one's own after nearly forty years of marriage.
- Santlofer, Jonathan. *The Widower's Notebook*. Penguin Books, 2018.
A husband writes of his life in grief after the sudden death of his wife.



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- Scarboro, Elizabeth. *My foreign Cities*. Liveright Publishing Corporation (Norton & Co), 2013.
Tender, well-written story of a young couple grappling with life threatening illness and dying.
- Seager, Sara. *The Smallest Lights in the Universe: A Memoir*. Crown, 2020.
An astronomer writes about the cosmos, her life and the loss of her husband.
- Sheffield, Rob. *Love Is a Mix Tape: Life and Loss, One Song at a Time*. Crown Publishing Group, 2007. A young widower tells his funny, wonderful story through music.
- Thomas, Abigail. *A Three Dog Life*. Harcourt, Inc., 2006.
The story of a woman's experience of living with loss from the impact of her husband's traumatic brain injury.
- Trillin, Calvin. *About Alice*. Random House, 2006.
A tender memory book by the New Yorker staff writer on his beloved wife.
- Wilber, Ken. *Grace And Grit: Spirituality and Healing In The Life And Death Of Treya Killam Wilber*. Shambhala, 1992.

Fiction

- Alvarez, Julia. *Afterlife*. Algonquin Books Of Chapel Hill, 2020.
A widow's story of living in a broken world, while staying true to the values of her beloved and without losing faith in herself and others.
- Donoghue, Emma. *Hood*. HarperCollins, 1996; Alyson Books, 1998.
Upon the sudden death of her female lover, a grieving woman reflects on their long relationship.
- Godwin, Gail. *Evenings at Five*. Random House Ballantine Publishing Group, 2003.
A novella about a widow grieving the loss of her long-time husband and their life together.
- Hood, Ann. Ruby. Picador, 1998.
A quirky story of the grief of a young woman due to the sudden death of her husband.
- Kingsolver, Barbara. *Prodigal Summer*. Harper, 2000.
A lyrical novel set in Southern Appalachia about the lush, natural world and love after widowhood.
- Muske-Dukes, Carol. *Life After Death*. Random House, 2001.
- Nwabineli, Onyi. *Someday, Maybe*. Graydon House, 2022.
A novel about a young woman's journey through the unimaginable loss of her husband by suicide and the support of her tight-knit Nigerian family and friends.
- Tóibín, Colm. *Nora Webster*. Scribner, 2014.
The story of a young Irish widow left with four children, her grief, and her struggle to create a new life.



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Tyler, Anne. *The Beginner's Goodbye*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2012.

A story of a “quirky” husband moving through his grief over the death of his wife through her frequent appearances.

Vida, Vendela. *The Lovers*. Harper Collins, 2010.

A story of grief and the impact of place as a widow returns to where she honeymooned in a village in Turkey.

Parental Loss

Poetry

Chang, Victoria. *Obit*. Copper Canyon Press, 2020.

Wonderful selection of obituaries to all things related to grief.

Henning, Sara. *Terra Incognita*. Ohio University Press, 2022.

Elegies that cover the challenging relationship of mother and daughter through grief and re-entry into the world.

Olds, Sharon. *The Father*. Random House, 1992.

Trethewey, Natasha. *Native Guard: Poems*. Mariner Books, Houghton Mifflin Co., 2007.

The poet weaves her own traumatic grief experience regarding the murder of her mother with the racial history of her native deep South.

Qi, Jenny. *Focal Point*. Steel Toe Books, 2021.

A collection of poems on the loss of her mother and an exploration of how to live a life given loss.

Memoir

Adichie, Chimamanda Ngozi. *Notes On Grief*. Knopf, 2021.

Short writings with lovely descriptions of a daughter's experience of the surprising loss of her beloved father.

Alexie, Sherman. *You Don't Have to Say You Love Me: A Memoir*. Little, Brown and Company, 2017.

A grief story of a complicated relationship between a mother and son, impacted by mental illness and the experience of violence and oppression perpetrated on Native American people.

Brautigan, Ianthe. *You Can't Catch Death*. St. Martins Press, 2001.

A daughter's search to understand her writer-father after his suicide.



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- Carter, Zoe Fitzgerald. *Imperfect Endings: A Daughter's Tale of Life and Death*. Simon & Shuster, 2010.
The story of a daughter's dealing with her mother's decision to end her life after years of a debilitating and progressive illness.
- Chow, Kat. *Seeing Ghosts: A Memoir*. Hachette Book Group, 2021.
A story of a daughter's loss of her mother and of generational loss
- Danticat, Edwidge. *Brother I'm Dying*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2007.
The interwoven political and personal story of the Haitian diaspora, the illness of the writer's father and the unnecessary death of her uncle.
- Eggers, Dave. *A Heartbreaking Work of Staggering Genius*. Simon & Shuster, 2000.
The uniquely and delightfully written story of a twenty-two year old man who becomes the guardian of his younger brother after both parents die of cancer.
- Macdonald, Helen. *H Is for Hawk*. Grove Press, 2014.
Detailed exposition of a daughter attempting to tame the wild grief for her father as she trains a goshawk.
- McCracken, Elizabeth. *The Hero Of This Book*. HarperCollins, 2022.
An exploration of a daughter's grief and her devoted relationship to her mother.
- O'Rourke, Meghan. *The Long Goodbye*. Riverhead Books, Penguin Group, 2011.
Stunningly true narrative of a young woman's grief for her mother.
- Romm, Robin. *The Mercy Papers: A Memoir Of Three Weeks*. Scribner, 2009.
A daughter's account of the agonizing details and grief during the last weeks of her mother's dying.
- Smith, Claire Bidwell. *The Rules Of Inheritance*. Hudson Street Press, 2012.
This memoir is about what we inherit and how our lives may be shaped by grief.
- Strayed, Cheryl. *Wild: From Lost To Found On The Pacific Trail*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2012.
A compelling, "can't put it down" memoir written by a young woman in grief over the loss of her mother who challenges herself - a hero's journey - by hiking the Pacific Trail alone.
- Shultz, Kathryn. *Lost & Found*. Random House, 2022.
An account of the New Yorker writer's experience of grief over the loss of her father and the falling in love with her partner.
- Trethewey, Natasha. *Memorial Drive: A Daughter's Memoir*. HarperCollins, 2020.
Written in exquisite prose about the murder of the poet's mother by her former stepfather, it is the story of the impact of the enduring trauma of domestic abuse, sudden loss and racism.
- Wickersham, Joan. *The Suicide Index: Putting My Father's Death In Order*. Harcourt Inc., 2008.
In the details of the suicide of her father and its impact on herself and family.



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Williams, Terry Tempest. *Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place*. Random House, 1992.

A contemplative narrative about the rise of the Great Salt Lake interwoven with the death of the writer's mother due to cancer.

Wood, Monica. *When We Were The Kennedys: A Memoir From Mexico, Maine*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2012.

From the perspective of the author as a young girl, this is the story about the death of her father and the impact on herself and family.

Zaulner, Michelle. *Crying In H Mart*. Knopf, 2021.

A coming of age story of a musician daughter and her mother through food and memory.

Fiction

Agee, James. *A Death In The Family*. Bantam, 1983.

A classic, this is a story of a father's sudden death in the early years of the 20th century written in the voice of his young son.

Clemmons, Zinzi. *What We Lose: A Novel*. Penguin Random House, 2017.

A thoughtful and evocative coming of age story addressing loss through the multiple lenses of racial and identity issues of a first generation African American, the experience of motherhood and a daughter's grief.

George, Jessica. *Maame: A Novel*. St. Martin's Press, 2023.

A coming of age story of a young woman navigating the the challenges of the illness and death of her father, racism and identity.

McGhee, Alison. *Never Coming Back: A Novel*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2017.

The story of a daughter's relationship with her mother diagnosed with her early Alzheimer's and her grief.

Quindlen, Anna. *One True Thing*. Random House, 1994.

Novel of a daughter/mother grief -filled deepening and changing relationship as the daughter attends to her dying mother.



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Sibling Loss

Poetry

- Howe, Marie. *What The Living Do*. Norton, 1998.
A series of poems on the death of her brother from AIDS.
- Nguyen, Diana Khoi. *Ghost Of*. Omnidodown Publishing, 2018.
Poems and images on the loss of a brother to suicide.

Memoir

- Bialosky, Jill. *History Of A Suicide: my sister's unfinished life*. Atria Books, 2011.
Bravely honest story of the writer's attempt to understand the suicide of her beloved younger sister.
- Dornstein, Ken. *The Boy Who Fell Out Of The Sky*. Random House, 2006.
A young man's grief-filled search to know the brother who lost his life in the explosion of Pan Am Flight 103 over Lockerbie, Scotland, leads to saving his own.
- Orr, Gregory. *The Blessing*. Council Oak Books, 2002.
- Parravani, Christa. *her: a memoir*. Henry Holt and Company, 2013.
A memoir of the death of an identical twin and its exceptional impact of loss.
- Smith, Alison. *Name All The Animals*. Scribner, 2004.
Written from the perspective of the sister of a young man who died, this is a moving story of an entire family's grief.
- Stephenson, Melissa. *Driven: A White-Knuckled Ride to Heartbreak and Back*. Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2018.
A woman's healing journey following her troubled brother's death, told through a series of cars.

Fiction

- Carey, Lisa. *Every Visible Thing*. HarperCollins, 2006.
The grief story of a family's response to the disappearance of its older son.
- Espach, Alison. *Notes On Your Sudden Disappearance*. Henry Holt and Company, 2022.
The story of a teenage girl's grief over the sudden loss of her older sister and her continued presence in her life.
- Henkin, Joshua. *The World Without You*. Pantheon Books/Random House, 2012.
A story about a family, the relationships amongst them, and the impact of the absence of the journalist brother, killed in Iraq.



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Prose, Francine. *Goldengrove*. HarperCollins, 2008.

A very true novel about the impact of the death of a teenage girl on her family, and primarily on her younger sister.

Robinson, Elisabeth. *The True And Outstanding Adventures of the Hunt Sisters: A Novel*. Little, Brown and Company, 2004.

A comic, poignant novel written in letters about a woman and her dying sister.

Serpell, Namwali. *The Furrows: An Elegy*. Hogarth, 2022.

A wonderfully written story about how grief lives within us, and the desire to imagine how our lost one continues a life.

Sherwood, Ben. *The Death And Life Of Charlie St. Cloud*. Bantam Books, 2004.

A magical story about two brothers and the desire to hold on to those we have lost.

Toews, Miriam. *All My Puny Sorrows*. McSweeney's, 2015.

A novel about sisters and the attempt to understand the emotional toll of depression, as well as the grief of a suicide.

Child Loss

Poetry

Hirsch, Edward. *Gabriel: A Poem*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2014.

A heartbreaking elegy written about the life and death of the poet's young son.

Rice, Stan. *Some Lamb*. The Figures, 1975.

Poems written during and after the death of his six year old daughter from leukemia.

Memoir

Allende, Isabelle. *Paula*. HarperCollins, 1995.

The novelist writes about the death of her daughter.

Crider, Tom. *Give Sorrow Words: A Father's Passage Through Grief*. Algonquin Books, 1996.

A father's account of the sudden loss of his daughter.

Delaney, Rob. *A Heart That Works*. Spiegel & Grau, 2022.

Detailed and emotion-filled memoir of the illness and death of the actor's toddler son from a brain tumor.

Didion, Joan. *Blue Nights*. Random House, 2011.

The reflections of the loss and life of the writer's daughter and what it means to be a parent.



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Greene, Jayson. *Once More We Saw Stars*. Alfred A. Knopf, 2019.

Written after the violent accidental death of his two-year-old daughter, this is a book which reflects both the personal and the universal challenge of how we live and find meaning in what is unbearable.

Gross, Jessica Berger, ed. *About What Was Lost: 20 Writers on Miscarriage, Healing, and Hope*. Penguin Group, 2007.

A collection of writings on the experience of loss related to miscarriage.

Rapp, Emily. *The Still Point Of The Turning World*. The Penguin Press, 2013.

A poignant search for healing in the presence of impossible grief throughout the short-life of the writer's son dying of Tay-Sachs disease.

O'Hara, Maryanne. *Little Matches: A Memoir of Grief and Light*. HarperCollins, 2021.

A mother's grief exploration to find meaning following the death of her daughter from cystic fibrosis.

Rosenblatt, Roger. *Making Toast*. Harper Collins, 2010.

A father writes in poignant detail of life with his young grandchildren after the sudden death of their mother, his daughter.

Rothert, Donna. *At a Loss: Finding Your Way After Miscarriage, Stillbirth, or Infant Death*. Open Air Books, 2019.

Essays on the multifaceted experience of losing a pregnancy or baby written by a psychologist who experienced pregnancy loss herself.

Thome'se, P.F. Translation by Sam Garrett. *Shadowchild: A Meditation On Love And Loss*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2005.

Reflections by a father on the loss of his newborn daughter.

Wesolowska, Monica. *Holding Silvan: a brief life*. Hawthorne Books and Literary Arts, 2013.

A fierce narrative about the loss of an infant son.

Fiction

Cohen, Leah Hager. *The Grief of Others*. Riverhead Books (Penguin Group), 2011.

A novel about the impact of the loss of a baby on members of a family struggling to heal and find reconnection with each other.

De Kerangal, Maylis. *The Heart*. Farr, Straus and Giroux, 2016.

Li, Yiyun. *Where Reasons End*. Random House, 2019.

A grieving mother communicates with her lost son who died by suicide.

McCann, Colum. *Apeirogon: A Novel*. Bloomsbury Publishing, 2020.

Based on a true story of two fathers, one Palestinian-Muslim and one Israeli-Jew mourning the death of their children due to political violence.

Schwartz, Lynne Sharon. *Disturbances In The Field*. Bantam Books, 1983.



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Friend Loss

Memoir

Caldwell, Gail. *Let's Take The Long Way Home: A memoir of friendship*. Random House, 2010.

An intimate and emotionally true narrative of friendship and grief.

Hsu, Hua. *Stay True: A Memoir*. Doubleday, 2022

A story of friendship, of coming of age and of grief upon the random murder of a young man.

Newman, Catherine. *We All Want Impossible Things: A Novel*. Harper, 2022.

A story filled with heartbreak and comedy as a woman accompanies her long-time best friend in her last weeks of life.