

Remembrance

A RoadPeace Anthology



RoadPeace

Established in 1992, RoadPeace is the UK specialist charity for Road Crash Victims. We strive to raise awareness of the responsibilities of all road users to bring about the reduction of road danger. We encourage concern for the most vulnerable – pedestrians and cyclists, the very young and the elderly

Selected by Cynthia Barlow in memory of her daughter Alexandra Jane McVitty who was killed by a lorry while cycling to work on 7 June 2000

Produced by Cynthia Barlow and Isabel Hariades designed by Tony Roberts

Thanks are also due to Julie Ackroyd and Shehzana Mamujee

If any bereaved families have either come across an item of prose or poetry which has had meaning for them, or if they have themselves written something which they think will help others, please send it to RoadPeace, PO Box 2579, London NW10 3PW

Sudden Death

Stop All the Clocks

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.

W H Auden

From Collected Poems by W. H. Auden published by Faber and Faber

Song

When I am dead, my dearest, Sing no sad songs for me; Plant thou no roses at my head, Nor shady cypress tree: Be the green grass above me With showers and dewdrops wet: And if thou wilt, remember, And if thou wilt, forget.

I shall not see the shadows, I shall not feel the rain; I shall not hear the nightingale Sing on as if in pain: And dreaming through the twilight That doth not rise nor set, Haply I may remember, And haply may forget.

Christina Rossetti

For thou shalt sleep

For thou shalt sleep and never wake again
And quitting life, shall quit all living pain;
But we thy friends shall all these sorrows find
Which in forgetful death thou leav'st behind.

Lucretius, translated by John Dryden

Death

All is well.

Death is a Fisherman

Death is a fisherman, the world we see His fish-pond is, and we the fishes be; His net some general sickness; howe'er he Is not so kind as other fishers be: For if they take one of the smaller fry. They throw him in again, he shall not die: But death is sure to kill all he can get, And all is fish with him that comes to net.

Beniamin Franklin

Poor Richard's Almanack. September, 1733.

Do Not Stand at My Grave and Weep

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 sun 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.

Attributed to Mary Frye

Death is nothing at all. I have only slipped away into the next room. I am I and you are you. Whatever we were to each other, that we still are. Call me by my old familiar name, speak to me in the easy way you always used. Put no difference in your tone, wear no forced air of solemnity or sorrow. Laugh as we always laughed at the little jokes we enjoyed together. Pray, smile, think of me, pray for me. Let my name be ever the household word that it always was. Let it be spoken without effect. without the trace of a shadow on it. Life means all that it ever meant. It is the same as it ever was: there is unbroken continuity. Why should I be out of mind because I am out of sight? I am waiting for you, for an interval. somewhere very near, iust round the corner.

Henry Scott Holland 1847–1918, Canon of St Paul's Cathedral

Bereavement

For Whom the Bell Tolls

No man is an island,
Entire of itself.
Every man is a piece of the continent,
A part of the main.
If a clod be washed away by the sea,
Europe is the less.
As well as if a promontory were.
As well as if a manor of thy friend's
Or of thine own were.
Any man's death diminishes me,
Because I am involved in mankind;
And therefore, never send to know
For whom the bell tolls;
It tolls for thee.

John Donne Meditation XVII

Voices

Voices ideal and beloved
Of those who have died, or of those
Who are lost for us like the dead.

Sometimes in dreams they speak to us; Sometimes within thinking the brain hears them. And with the sound of them for a moment return Sounds from the first poetry of our life — Like music, at night, in the distance that dies away.

Constantine Cavafy, translated by John Mavrocordato

Years On

At the trailing edge of autumn gray rain falling hard to soften the native grasses in the old graveyard

My son is tucked well under there among the clay and stones, though what his name betokens is nothing more than bones

And how long would it take for the water to soak down and cover every bone with its fine transparent gown?

I do not know, merely recall moments of pleasure and mirth As he trod lightly on you, rest lightly on him, earth.

Requiescat

Tread lightly, she is near
Under the snow.
Speak gently, she can hear
The daisies grow.

All her bright golden hair

Tarnished with rust

She that was young and fair

Fallen to dust.

Coffin-board, heavy stone
Lie on her breast,
I vex my heart alone
She is at rest.

Peace, peace, she cannot hear
Lyre or sonnet,
All my life's buried here
Heap earth upon it.

Chris Wallace-Crabbe

Oscar Wilde

The Silver Swan

The silver swan, who living had no note, When death approached unlocked her silent throat; Leaning her breast against the reedy shore, Thus sung her first and last, and sung no more: Farewell, all joys; O death come close my eyes; More geese than swans now live, more fools than wise.

Orlando Gibbons (1583–1625)

Oh! Snatched Away in Beauty's Bloom

Oh! snatched away in beauty's bloom,
On thee shall press no ponderous tomb;
But on thy turf shall roses rear
Their leaves, the earliest of the year;
And the wild cypress wave in tender gloom;

And off by yon blue gushing stream
Shall Sorrow lean her drooping head,
And feed deep thought with many a dream,
And lingering pause and lightly tread;
Fond wretch! as if her step disturbed the dead!

Away we know that tears are vain,

That Death nor heeds nor hears distress:

Will this unteach us to complain?

Or make one mourner weep the less?

And thou — who tell'st me to forget,

Thy looks are wan, thine eyes are wet.

Lord Byron

From Hebrew Melodies

Remember

8

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.

Christina Rossetti

Music, when soft voices die

Music, when soft voices die, Vibrates in the memory, Odours, when sweet violets sicken, Live within the sense they quicken.

Rose leaves, when the rose is dead, Are heaped for the beloved's bed; And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone, Love itself shall slumber on.

Percy Bysshe Shelley

But Not Forgotten

I think no matter where you stray,
That I shall go with you a way.
Though you may wander sweeter lands,
You will not forget my hands,
Nor yet the way I held my head
Nor the tremulous things I said.
You will still see me, small and white
And smiling, in the secret night,
And feel my arms about you when
The day comes fluttering back again.
I think, no matter where you be,
You'll hold me in your memory
And keep my image there without me,
By telling later loves about me.

Dorothy Parker

To Lose a Child

Grief is the loneliest of human experiences Losing a child is the hardest thing in life to bear There is no antidote, no cure, no end, No one has any answers.

It is a long hard battle,

But there are no enemies.

It is a long and winding path,

But there are no signs to guide you.

It is an overbearing weight,

But no one can see the burden that you carry in your heart.

It is unimaginable anguish,

but no one else perceives the half of it.

It is the saddest of all deaths,

But the world is overflowing with enough sadness of its own.

It is the end of your world, but you have to go on living.

Marilyn Shawe

Dirge without Music

I am not resigned to the shutting away of loving hearts in the hard ground.

So it is and so it will be, for so it has been, time out of mind: Into the darkness they go, the wise and the lovely. Crowned With lilies and laurel they go, but I am not resigned.

Lovers and thinkers into the earth with you. Be one with the dull, the indiscriminate dust. A fragment of what you felt, of what you knew, A formula, a phrase remains – but the best is lost.

The answers quick and keen, the honest look, the laughter, the love, —
They are gone. They have gone to feed the roses.
Elegant and curled
Is the blossom. I know. But I do not approve.
More precious was the light in your eyes than all the roses in the world.

Down, down into the darkness of the grave Gently they go, the beautiful, the tender, the kind; Quietly they go, the intelligent, the witty, the brave. I know. But I do not approve. And I am not resigned.

Edna St Vincent Millay

'To Lose a Child ' by Marilyn Shawe on page 9 is taken from ENDURING, SHARING, LOVING published by Darton Longman and Todd

Remembering

Transformations

Portion of this yew Is a man my grandsire knew, Bosomed here at its foot: This branch may be his wife, A ruddy human life Now turned to a green shoot.

These grasses must be made Of her who often prayed, Last century, for repose; And the fair girl long ago Whom I often tried to know May be entering this rose.

So, they are not underground, But as nerves and veins abound In the growths of upper air, And they feel the sun and rain, And the energy again That made them what they were!

Thomas Hardy

Remembering

Go ahead and mention my child. The one that died, you know. Don't worry about hurting me further. The depth of my pain doesn't show. Don't worry about making me cry. I'm already crying inside. Help me to heal by releasing The tears that I try to hide. I'm hurt when you just keep silent, Pretending he didn't exist. I'd rather you mention my child, Knowing that he has been missed. You asked me how I was doing. I say "pretty good" or "fine". But healing is something ongoing. I feel it will take a lifetime.

Elizabeth Dent (unpublished)

The Noble Nature

It is not growing like a tree
In bulk, doth make Man better be;
Or standing long an oak, three hundred year,
To fall a log at last, dry bald and sere:
A lily of a day
Is fairer far in May
Although it fall and die that night;
It was the plant and flower of light,
In small proportions we just beauties see;

In small proportions we just beauties see; And in short measures life may perfect be.

Ben Jonson

Living Bouquets

When I quit this mortal shore
And mosey 'round this earth no more,
Do not weep and do not sob;
I may have found a better job.
Don't go and buy a large bouquet
For which you'll find it hard to pay,
Don't mope around and feel all blue;
I may be better off than you.

Don't tell the folks I was a saint
Or any old thing that I ain't.
If you have jam like that to spread,
Please hand it out before I'm dead.
If you have roses bless your soul,
Just pin one in my buttonhole
While I'm alive and well today;
Don't wait until I'm gone away.

Mabeel Easley (unpublished)

Farewell

Farewell to Thee! But not farewell To all my fondest thoughts of Thee; Within my heart they still shall dwell And they shall cheer and comfort me.

Life seems more sweet that Thou didst live And men more true Thou wert one; Nothing is lost that Thou didst give, Nothing destroyed that Thou hast done.

Anne Brontë

Coping

Turn Again to Life

If I should die and leave you here awhile, Be not like others, sore undone, who keep Long vigils by the silent dust, and weep. For my sake, turn again to life and smile, Nerving thy heart and trembling hand to do Something to comfort other hearts than thine. Complete those dear unfinished tasks of mine And I, perchance, may therein comfort you.

Mary Lee Hall

Life Goes On

If I should go before the rest of you Break not a flower Nor inscribe a stone Nor when I am 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

Joyce Grenfell

For those left sorrowing

Do not shed tears when I have gone but smile instead because I have lived.

Do not shut your eyes and pray to God that I'll come back but open your eyes and see all that I have left behind.

I know your heart will be empty because you cannot see me but still I want you to be full of the love we shared.

You can turn your back on tomorrow and live only for yesterday or you can be happy for tomorrow because of what happened between us yesterday.

You can remember me and grieve that I have gone or you can cherish my memory and let it live on.

You can cry and lose yourself, become distraught and turn your back on the world or you can do what I want — smile, wipe away the tears, learn to love again, and go on.

David Harkins

For Those Who Die Young

Doomed to know not Winter, only Spring — A being trod the flowery April Blighty for a while; Took his fill of music, joy of thought and seeing, Came and stayed and went, nor ever ceased to smile.

Came and stayed and went, and now, when all is finished, You alone have crossed the melancholy stream. Yours the pang, but his, the undiminished Undecaying gladness, undeparted dream.

R.L. Stevenson

Hope

Hope is the thing with feathers That perches in the soul, And sings the tune without the words, And never stops at all,

And sweetest in the gale is heard; And sore must be the storm That could abash the little bird That kept so many warm.

I've heard it in the chillest land, And on the strangest sea; Yet, never, in extremity, It asked a crumb of me.

Emily Dickinson

Support From Others

Don't tell me that you understand.
Don't tell me that you know.
Don't tell me that I will survive,
How I will surely grow.
Don't come at me with answers
That can only come from me.
Don't tell me how my grief will pass,
That I will soon be free.
Accept me in my ups and downs.
I need someone to share.
Just hold my hand and let me cry
And say, "My friend, I care."

Author Unknown (unpublished)

Bereaved Birthdays

Birthdays are a time for celebration Not a time for tears But what happens when the birthdays No longer mark the years?

A birthday marks the moment A spirit enters earthly life To share its special love and joy And learn from earthly strife.

Before a spirit comes to us
It knows when and how it must depart
It chose it's path carefully
We are honoured from the start.

The sadness we now feel
On such a joyous day
Is longing for our loved one's touch
It's natural to feel this way.

For even though the birthdays No longer mark a spirit's stay Love continues on forever To touch us everyday.

So hug your precious memories Closer to your heart And honour your beloved spirit child Who chose you from the start.

Author Unknown

Indian Prayer

When I am dead
Cry for me a little
Think of me sometimes
But not too much.
Think of me now and again
As I was in life
At some moments it's pleasant to recall
But not for long.
Leave me in peace
And I shall leave you in peace
And while you live
Let your thoughts be with the living.

Traditional

The Trees

The trees are coming into leaf Like something almost being said; The recent buds relax and spread, Their greenness is a kind of grief.

Is it that they are born again And we grow old? No, they die too, Their yearly trick of looking new Is written down in rings of grain.

Yet still the unresting castles thresh In full-grown thickness every May. Last year is dead, they seem to say, Begin afresh, afresh, afresh.

Philip Larkin

From Collected Poems by Philip Larkin published by Faber and Faber

Peace

From The Diary of Anne Frank [Saturday 15 July 1944]

That's the difficulty in these times, ideals, dreams and cherished hopes rise within us, only to meet the horrible truth and be shattered. It's really a wonder that I haven't dropped all my ideals, because they seem so absurd and impossible to carry out. Yet I keep them, because in spite of everything I still believe that people are really good at heart.

I simply can't build up my hopes on a foundation consisting of confusion, misery, and death, I see the world gradually being turned into a wilderness, I hear the ever approaching thunder, which will destroy us too, I can feel the sufferings of millions and yet, if I look up into the heavens, I think that it will all come right, that this cruelty too will end, and that peace and tranquillity will return again. In the meantime, I must uphold my ideals, for perhaps the time will come when I shall be able to carry them out!

Peace

Death must be so beautiful, to lie in the soft brown earth, with the grasses waving above one's head, and listen to silence. To have no yesterday, and no tomorrow. To forget time, to forgive life, to be at peace.

Oscar Wilde

Preacher Don't Send Me

Preacher, Don't send me when I die to some big ghetto in the sky where rats eat cats of the leopard type and Sunday brunch is grits and tripe.

I've known those rats I've seen them kill and grits I've had would make a hill, or maybe a mountain so what I need from you on Sunday is a different creed.

Preacher, please don't promise me streets of gold and milk for free. I stopped all milk at four years old and once I'm dead I won't need gold.

I'd call a place pure paradise where families are loyal and strangers are nice, where the music is jazz and the season is fall. Promise me that or nothing at all.

Maya Angelou

Stars

The stars mean different things to different people. For some they are nothing more than twinkling lights in the sky. For travellers they are guides. For scholars they are food for thought. For my businessman they are wealth. But for everyone the stars are silent. Except from now on just for you.....

When you look up at the sky at night, since I shall be living on one of them and laughing on one of them, for you it will be as if all the stars were laughing. You and only you will have stars that can laugh!

And when you are comforted (time soothes all sorrows) you will be happy to have known me. You will always be my friend. You will want to laugh with me. And from time to time you will open your window, just for the pleasure of it....And your friends will be astonished to see you laughing whilst gazing at the sky. And so you will say to them, 'Yes, stars always make me laugh'.

Antoine de Saint-Exupéry from The Little Prince

Poems by RoadPeace Members

A Promise

22

'I go to prepare a place for you' John 14:2

Perhaps if we could see
The beauty of the land
To which our loved are called
From you and me
We'd understand.

Perhaps if we could hear
The welcome they receive
From old familiar voices –
All so dear,
We would not grieve.

Perhaps if we could know
The reason why they went
We'd smile – and wipe away
The tears that flow
And wait content.

Tina Mouland-Collins

Written in memory of her partner Tim, for a spark of strength for all of us bereaved

Dolphins

In memory of our son Nathan

The police came to tell us what happened to you With a Polaroid of your dolphins tattoo Encircling your arm in bright turquoise blue As a way to identify you.

The rest of you shrouded to keep you from view.

Too awful to see. How could this be true?

Next day Christmas Eve, they took us to view
The road where you died – no that isn't true.
You were killed like a dolphin snared in a net.
Dragged under a car, blood soaked and wet.
Crushed, ripped and torn, bruised battered and blue.
You were too strong to die. This can't happen to you.

Christmas Day didn't happen – can it ever again? When all it will bring are such memories of pain. 'Phone all your friends and the relatives too. Explain to them all what has happened to you. "That's right Nathan's dead. He was just twenty-two." No that can't be right. No, that can't be true.

To the funeral parlour deep in the snow To organise how we would lay you so low. Sorting your clothes for them to dress you. How can we do this? This can't be true. In the chapel of rest where we visited you, Under your sleeve the dolphins so blue.

New Year. Celebration? What the hell for? When our number one son can't walk through the door. Two days later back home you came For the last night ever but never the same, In a coffin of wood of a different hue From your circlet of dolphins of bright turquoise blue.

Next morning they put you back in the hearse. Nothing on earth could be any worse. To the church where your friends all waited for you And I read the eulogy, all of it true, Even mentioned your tattoo of dolphins so blue. Then we all had to say our goodbyes to you.

We planted your grave with pansies of blue, And later forget-me-nots (they are blue too). Two birthdays have passed and we gave you your card. No point in a present. God this is so hard. I pray your soul's swimming with vigour anew In a clear azure sea with the dolphins so blue.

David Midmer

Eric

Once a child who kept on growing
His song and laughter always flowing,
The constant doorbell, his telephone tone,
In this life he was never alone.
Try to remember his jokes, his schemes,
How he was always fulfilling his dreams.
The clothes, his trainers, the cars, his gold,
He had it all except getting old.
Please don't let his death be in vain,
As that would add to our family's pain.

Raine Family

Eric, aged 20, son of Peter and Rosemary Raine, brother to Sarah and Vickie and uncle to Harley was killed on 4 June 2001 as a rear seat passenger.

A Haiku, a short poem with a deep meaning

How can the End
Be the Beginning again
When all seems Lost?
Have you thought about it? Because if you haven't, don't read on.

It means that when something dreadful happens, like, someone dies, it seems the end, and yet it is the beginning of coping without.

Sophie Large

Extract from 'Crash'

Now we are left to rise above the sheer waste, the anger and bitterness that can only destroy. And in recognition for all that you are, In love, gratitude and thanks, my son, reflecting on your most positive powers of gentle righteousness.

Live on to challenge those who are unable to recognise the dangerous weapon which empowers, if used in ignorance and carelessness.

Ann John, for her son Dominic

To Those I love and Those Who Love Me

When I am gone, release me, let me go - I have so many things to see and do. You mustn't tie yourself to me with tears; Be happy that we had so many years.

I gave you all my love; you can only guess How much you gave to me in happiness. I thank you for the love we each have shown, But now it's time I travelled on alone.

So grieve a while for me if grieve you must, then let your grief be comforted by trust. It's only for a while that we must part; So bless the memories within your heart.

I won't be far away, for life goes on; So if you need me, call and I will come Though you can't see or touch me, I'll be near -And if you listen within your heart you'll hear All my love around you, soft and clear

And then when you must come this way alone I'll greet you with a smile, and say 'Welcome Home'.

Sandra Green for her son Paul

27

Inspired by Dunblane

Tragedy! Evervone talks Eats, sleeps and drinks a tragedy. News headlines tributes pour in wreaths layed explanations sought reasons given Eminent people visit hushed voices pay tribute. Sorrow, the world is in sorrow and I weep because I share. But what about my tragedy! Isn't every life precious? Yet no questions are asked no heads must roll effort not required. Just accept, an accident they happen, no accountability necessary. Is not my son's life as valuable however it is taken? I cannot rest at this neglect of such preciousness. The nation is crying over this tragedy Who cries over mine except the ones that knew

how precious this life was? Small headlines for an extinguished flame of glowing innocence and hopefulness. Death visited alone. But how many singularly shattered lives have to take place before the world takes notice and it becomes unacceptable? How many media pages radio announcements television coverage unanswered prayers fail to make a positive end to the carnage that takes place on our roads? Silently, regularly and unquestioned. What a disaster! A tragedy out of all proportion if it was to happen on one day! Four thousand promises abruptly ended. uncountable hearts broken. Is anyone listening? Does anyone care?

Ann John

Sayings and Epigrams

By children's births and death, I am become So dry, that I am now my owne sad tombe.

John Donne

One owes respect to the living: but to the dead one owes nothing but the truth. *Voltaire*

Grief is itself a med'cine. William Cowper

The heart will break, but broken lives on. Lord Byron

Say not in grief 'he is no more' but live in thankfulness that he was.

Hebrew proverb

What the caterpillar perceives is the end, to the butterfly is just the beginning.

Traditional

Everything that has a beginning has an ending. Make your peace with that and all will be well.

Buddhist Saying

The only duty we owe to history is to rewrite it. Oscar Wilde

Love has no age, no limit and no death.

John Galsworthy

Death is not the greatest loss in life. The greatest loss is what dies inside us while we live.

Norman Cousins

Your pain is the breaking of the shell that encloses your understanding. Kahlil Gibran



The RoadPeace National Helpline

The Helpline – **0845 4500 355** – is a lifeline, offering the bereaved and injured vital information and support, 7 days a week from 9am to 9pm, with expertise, empathy and understanding. This is followed up by guides written from the road victim's perspective with long experience of tragic cases and their legal aftermath.

Support for victims

Long-term support and friendship are offered through local groups, contacts with people similarly affected and newsletters. This is reinforced by acts and ways of Remembrance, including World Day of Remembrance for Road Traffic Victims on the third Sunday of November, **Remember Me** roadside memorial plaques available to all, an Internet Memorial, local memorials such as the RoadPeace Garden in Manchester, the Monument to Road Traffic Victims in Liverpool, and memorial trees in the RoadPeace Wood in the National Memorial Arboretum. RoadPeace promotes August as the National Road Victims month countrywide.

Road Danger Reduction

RoadPeace works for real road safety – to reduce the causes of road danger and risks to vulnerable road users – acting with other organisations campaigning on Road Safety Issues. RoadPeace is a founder member of the Safer Streets Coalition.

International Work

RoadPeace collaborates with many victim organisations in Europe and beyond as an active member of the European Federation of Road Traffic Victims (FEVR), and takes part in relevant United Nations and World Health Organisation activities and meetings.



RoadPeace, PO Box 2579, London NW10 3PW Telephone 020 8838 5102 Fax 020 8838 5103 Helpline 0845 45 00 35 5 e-mail info@roadpeace.org Registered Charity Number 1087192