FITTING FAREWELL

Selected Readings for Funeral Services

In this booklet is a selection of readingsthat are suitable for use during funeral services. They are purely suggestions and are designed to help you make the perfect choice for your loved one's service.

If you would prefer a reading that is not included, don't worry - you can. Simply send us the reading by email for inclusion and we will do the rest.

Our aim is your satisfaction and to ensure your loved one has a fitting farewell.

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A Child Loaned

I'll lend you for a little time
A child of Mine." He said.
"For you to love the while he lives
And mourn for when he's dead.
It may be six or seven year
Or twenty-two or three
But will you, till I call him back
Take care of him for Me?
He'll bring his charms to gladden you
And should his stay be brief,
You'll have his lovely memories
As solace for your grief.

I cannot promise he will stay
Since all from Earth return,
But there are lessons taught down there
I want the child to learn.
I've looked this wide world over
In my search for teacher's true,
And from the throngs that crowd life's lanes,
I have selected you;
Now will you give him all your love,
Nor think the labour vain
Nor hate Me when I come to call
And take him back again?

I fancied that I heard them say,
"Dear Lord, They will be done,
For all the joy Thy child shall bring,
For the risk of grief we'll run.
We'll shelter him with tenderness,
We'll love him while we may,
And for the happiness we've known,
Forever grateful stay.
But should the angels call for him
Much sooner than we planned,
We'll brave the bitter grief that comes
And try to understand."

A Gaelic Farewell

May the road rise to meet you,
May the wind be always at your back.
May the sun shine warm upon your face.
May the rain fall softly upon your fields until we meet again,
And may God hold you in the hollow of his hand.

A Prayer

The death of someone we love and care about
Is like the death of part of us.
No one else will ever call out from within us
Quite the same responses, the same feelings or actions or ideas.
Their death is an ending of one part of a story.
Lord as we look back over Rose's life
We ask what we have received, what we can appropriate
And continue on in our own lives and what must be laid to rest.
Our love for her reminds us that our sharing
In one another's lives brings both support and pain.
Our being parted from her reminds us of our own mortality
And that your love is enduring.
We thank you that our love for Rose draws us together
And gives us a new appreciation of one another
And of the beauty and fragility of relationships
Which mirror your grace and goodness to us.
Lord, time's tide may wash her footprints from the shore
But not our love for her nor the influence of her life upon our own
Nor the ways in which they will ever be a sign for us
Of those things which really matter—which are eternal.
Hear this prayer for your love's sake. Amen.

A Prayer of Peace

Make me a channel of your peace.
Where there is hatred, let us sow love;
Where there is injury, your pardon;
Where there is discord, union;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
Where there is sadness, joy;
O divine master, grant that we may not so much seek
To be consoled as to consoled,
To be understood as to understand,
To be loved as to love,
For it is in giving that we receive,
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned;
And it is in dying that we are born to eternal life.
Amen.

A Reflection On An Autumn Day

I took up a handful of grain and let it slip flowing through my fingers, and I said to myself
This is what it is all about. There is no longer any room for pretence. At harvest time the essence is revealed - the straw and chaff are set aside, they have done their job. The grain alone matters - sacks of pure gold.

So it is when a person dies the essence of that person is revealed. At the moment of death a person's character stands out happy for the person who has forged it well over the years. Then it will not be the great achievement that will matter, nor, how much money or possessions a person has amassed. These like the straw and the chaff, will be left behind. It is what he has made of himself that will matter. Death can take away from us what we have, but it cannot rob us of who we are.

Death Is Nothing At All

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 that 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.

Play, 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 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,
Just around the corner.

All is well.

Desiderata

Go placidly amid the noise and haste
and remember what peace there may be in silence.
Be yourself
Especially do not feign affection.
Neither be cynical about love,
for in the face of all aridity and disappointment
it is as perennial as the grass.

Take kindly the counsel of the years,
gracefully surrendering the things of youth.
Nurture strength of spirit to shield you in sudden misfortune,
but do not distress yourself with imaginings.
Many fears are born of fatigue and loneliness.
Beyond a wholesome discipline be gentle with yourself.
You are a child of the universe no less than the trees and the stars.
You have a right to be here.
And whether it is clear to you or not,
no doubt the universe is unfolding as it should.

Therefore be at peace with God,
whatever you conceive Him to be,
And whatever your labours and aspirations
in the noisy confusion of life,
keep peace with your soul.
With all it's sham and drudgery and broken dreams
it is still a beautiful world.
Be cheerful. Strive to be happy.

Do Not Stand At My Grave And Weep

Do not stand at my grave and weep,
I am not there, I did 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.

Epitaph On A Child

Here, freed from pain, secure from misery, lies
A child, the darling of his parents' eyes:
A gentler Lamb ne'er sported on the plain,
A fairer flower will never bloom again;
Now let him sleep in peace his night of death.

Farewell, Sweet Dust

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.

Footprints

One night I dreamed I was walking
Along the beach with the Lord,
Many scenes from my life flashed across the sky.
In each scene I noticed footprints in the sand.
Sometimes there were two sets of footprints.
Other times there was only one.
This bothered me because I noticed
During the low periods of my life when I was
Suffering from anguish, sorrow or defeat,
I could see only one set of footprints.
So I said to the Lord, "You promised me,
Lord, that if I followed you,
You would walk with me always.
But I noticed during the most trying periods
Of my life there has only been
One set of prints in the sand.
Why, when I needed you most,
Have you not been there for me?
The Lord replied,
"The times when you have seen only one set of footprints
It was then that I carried you."

For The Fallen

With proud thanksgiving, a mother for her children,
England mourns for her dead across the sea.
Flesh of her flesh they were, spirit of her spirit,
Fallen in the cause of the free.

Solemn the drums thrill; Death august and royal
Sings sorrow up into immortal spheres,
There is music in the midst of desolation
And a glory that shines upon our tears.

They went with songs to the battle, they were young,
Straight of limb, true of eye, steady and aglow.
They were staunch to the end against odds uncounted;
They fell with their faces to the foe.

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them. We will remember them.

They mingle not with their laughing comrades again;
They sit no more at familiar tables of home;
They have no lot in our labour of the day-time;
They sleep beyond England's foam.

But where our desires are and our hopes profound,
Felt as a well-spring that is hidden from sight,
To the innermost heart of their own land they are known
As the stars are known to the Night;

As the stars that shall be bright when we are dust,
Moving in marches upon the heavenly plain;
As the stars that are starry in the time of our darkness,
To the end, to the end, they remain.

For What Is It To Die

For what is it to die but to stand naked in the wind and to melt into the sun?
And what is it to cease breathing,
but to free the breath from its restless tides,
that it may rise and expand and seek God unencumbered?
Only when you drink from the river of silence shall you indeed sing.
And when you reach the mountain top, then you shall begin to climb.
And when the earth shall claim your limbs, then shall you truly dance.

Four Candles

The first candle represents our grief.
The pain of losing you is intense
It reminds us of the depth of our love for you.
The second candle represents our courage.
To confront our sorrow,
To comfort each other,
To change our lives.
This third candle we light in your memory.
For the times we laughed,
The times we cried,
The times we were angry with each other,
The silly things you did,
The caring and joy you gave us.

God's Garden

God looked around his garden
And found an empty place,
He then looked down upon the earth
And saw your tired face.
He put his arms around you
And lifted you to rest.
God's garden must be beautiful
He always takes the best.
He knew that you were suffering
He knew you were in pain.
He knew that you would never
Get well on earth again.
He saw the road was getting rough
And the hills were hard to climb.
So he closed your weary eyelids
And whispered, 'Peace be Thine'.
It broke our hearts to lose you
But you didn't go alone,
For part of us went with you
The day God called you home.

God's Lent Girl

I'll lend you for a little while a child of mine, God said,
For you to love the while she lives, and mourn for when she's dead.
It may be six or seven years, or forty two or three,
But will you, 'til I call her back, take care of her for me?
She'll bring her charms to gladden you. And should her stay be brief,
You'll always have your memories as solace in your grief.
I cannot promise she will stay, since all from earth return,
But there are lessons taught below I want this child to learn.
I've looked this whole world over in my search for teachers true,
And from the folk that crowd life's lane, I have chosen you.
Now will you give her all your love and not think the labour vain,
Nor hate me when I come to take this lent child back again.
I fancy that I heard them say, 'Dear God Thy will be done',
For all the joys this child will bring, the risk of grief we'll run.
We will shelter her with tenderness, we'll love her while we may,
And for all the happiness we've ever known, we'll ever grateful stay.
But should the angels call her much sooner than we'd planned,
We will brace the bitter grief that comes and try to understand.

If I Should Die

If I should die 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.

If You Should Forget Me For A While

If you should forget me for a while,
And afterwards remember, do not grieve,
For if the darkness and the shadows
Leave a vestige of the thoughts that once I had,
Better by far that you should forget and smile
Than that you should remember and be sad.

Let Me Go

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 the friends we know.
Laugh at all the things we used to do
Miss me, but let me go.
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 fear 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.

Like As The Waves Make Towards The Pebbled Shore

Like as the waves make towards the pebbled shore,
So do our minutes hasten to their end,
Each changing place with that which goes before,
In sequent toil all forwards do contend.
Nativity, once in the main of light,
Crawls to maturity, wherewith being crown'd,
Crooked eclipses 'gainst his glory fight,
And Time, that gave, doth now his gift confound.
Time doth transfix the flourish set on youth,
And delves the parallels in beauty's brow;
Feels on the rarities of nature's truth,
And nothing stands but for his scythe to mow.
And yet to times in hope my verse shall stand,
Praising thy worth, despite his cruel hand.

Miss Me But Let Me Go

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 too long
And not with your head bowed low.
Remember the love that we once shared.
Miss me - but let me go.

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

When you are lonely and sick of heart,
Go to the friends we know
And bury your sorrows in doing good deeds.
Miss me - but let me go.

My Little Angel

You've just walked on ahead of me
And I've got to understand
You must release the ones you love
And let go of their hand.

I try and cope the best I can
But I'm missing you so much
If I could only see you
And once more feel your touch.

Yes, you've just walked on ahead of me
Don't worry I'll be fine
But now and then I swear I feel
Your hand slip into mine.

No Longer Mourn For Me

No longer mourn for me when I am dead
Than you shall hear the surly sullen bell
Give warning to the world that I am fled
From this vile world, with vilest worms to dwell;
Nay, if you read this line, remember not
The hand that writ it, for I love you so
That I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot,
If thinking on me then you should make you woe.
O if (I say) you look upon this verse,
When I, perhaps, compounded am with clay,
Do not so much as my poor name rehearse,
But let your love even with my life decay;
Lest the wise world should look into your moan,
And mock you with me after I am gone.

No Night Without

There is no night without a dawning
No winter without a spring
And beyond the dark horizon
Our hearts will once more sing ….
For those who leave us for a while
Have only gone away
Out of a restless, care worn world
Into a brighter day

No Sorrow To Die

Because I have loved life, I shall have no sorrow to die.
I have sent up my gladness on wings, to be lost in the blue of the sky.
I have run and leaped with the rain, I have taken the wind to my breast.
My cheek like a drowsy child to the face of the earth I have pressed.
Because I have loved life, I shall have no sorrow to die.

I have kissed young Love on the lips, I have heard his song to the end,
I have struck my hand like a seal in the loyal hand of a friend.
I have known the peace of heaven, the comfort of work done well.
I have longed for death in the darkness and risen alive out of hell.
Because I have loved life, I shall have no sorrow to die.

I give a share of my soul to the world where my course is run.
I know that my another shall finish the task I must leave undone.
I know that no flower, nor flint was in vain on the path I trod.
As one looks on a face through a window, through life I have looked on God,
Because I have loved life, I shall have no sorrow to die.

One At Rest

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.

Our Memories Build A Special Bridge

Our memories build a special bridge
When loved ones have to part
To help us feel were with them still
And soothe a grieving heart
They span the years and warm our lives
Preserving ties that bind
Our memories build a special bridge
And bring us peace of mind

Remember Me

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 speak, but I can listen
I cannot be seen, but I can be heard
So as you stand upon the shore
Gazing at the beautiful sea, remember me
As you look in awe at a mighty forest
And in its grand majesty, remember me
Remember me in your hearts,
In your thoughts, and the memories of the
Times we loved, the times we cried,
the battle we fought and the times we laughed
For if you always think of me,
I will never have gone.

Remember Me When I Am Gone Away

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 too 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.

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.

The Beauty of Death (Part Two - The Ascending)

I have passed a mountain peak and my soul is soaring in the
Firmament of complete and unbound freedom;
I am far, far away, my companions, and the clouds are
Hiding the hills from my eyes.

The valleys are becoming flooded with an ocean of silence, and the
Hands of oblivion are engulfing the roads and the houses;
The prairies and fields are disappearing behind a white specter
That looks like the spring cloud, yellow as the candlelight
And red as the twilight.

The songs of the waves and the humans of the streams
Are scattered, and the voices of the throngs reduced to silence;
And I can hear naught but the music of Eternity
In exact harmony with the spirit's desires.
I am cloaked in full whiteness;
I am in comfort; I am in peace.

The Book of Wisdom

The souls of the virtuous are in the hands of God,
no torment shall ever touch them.
In the eyes of the unwise, they did appear to die,
their going looked like a disaster,
their leaving us, like annihilation;
but they are in peace.
If they experienced punishment as men see it,
their hope was rich with immortality;
slight was their affliction, great will their blessings be.
God has put them to the test
and proved them worthy to be with Him;
he has tested them like gold in a furnace,
and accepted them as a holocaust.
When the trine comes for his visitation they will shine out;
as sparks run through the stubble, so will they.
They shall judge nations, rule over peoples,
and the Lord will be their king for ever.
They who trust in him will understand the truth,
those who are faithful will live with him in love;
for grace and mercy await those he has chosen.

The Divine Weaver

A man's life is laid in a loom of time
To a pattern he does not see.
While the Weaver works and the shuttles fly
Till the end of eternity.

Some shuttles are filled with silver thread,
And some with threads of gold;
While often but the darker hue
Is all that they may hold.
But the weaver watches with skilful eye
Each shuttle fly to and fro,
And sees the pattern so deftly wrought
As the loom works sure and slow.

God surely planned that pattern

Each thread – the dark and the fair –
Was chosen by his master skill
And placed in the web with care.
He only knows the beauty
And guides the shuttles which hold
The threads so unattractive
As well as the threads of gold.

Not till the loom is silent.
And the shuttles cease to fly
Shall God unroll the pattern
And explain the reason why
The dark threads are as needful
In the weavers skilful hand,
As the threads of gold and silver
In the pattern he had planned.

The Pilgrim's Progress (extract)

I see myself now at the end of my journey; my toilsome days are ended. I am going now to see that head which was crowned with thorns, and that face which was spit upon for me. I have formerly lived by hearsay and faith, but now I go where I shall live by sight, and shall be with Him in whose company I delight myself. I have loved to hear my Lord spoken of; and wherever I have seen the print of his shoe in the earth, there I have coveted to set my foot too. His name to me has been as a civet-box; yea, sweeter than all perfumes. His voice to me has been most sweet; and his countenance I have more desired than they that have most desired the light of the sun. His word I did use to gather for my food, and for antidotes against my faintings. He has held me, and has kept me from mine iniquities; yea, my steps hath he strengthened in his way.

Now, while he was thus in discourse, his countenance changed; his strong man bowed under him; and after he had said, "Take me, for I come unto Thee!" he ceased to be seen of them.

But glorious it was to see how the open region was filled with horses and chariots, with trumpeters and pipers, with singers and players on stringed instruments, to welcome the pilgrims as they went up, and followed on another in at the beautiful gate of the city.

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 these dear
Unfinished Tasks of mine,
And I, perchance
May therein comfort you.

We Let You Go

Into the darkness and warmth of the earth
We lay you down
Into the sadness and smiles of our memories
We lay you down
Into the cycle of living and dying and rising again
We lay you down
May you rest in peace, in fulfilment, in loving
May you run straight home in God's embrace
Into the freedom of wind and sunshine
We let you go
Into the dance of the stars and the planets
We let you go
Into the wind's breath and the hands of the star maker
We let you go
We love you, we miss you, we want you to be happy
Go safely, go dancing, go running home

What is Dying?

A ship sails and I stand
Watching till she fades on the horizon
And someone at my side says,
"She is gone".
Gone where?
Gone from my sight, that is all;
She is just as large as when I saw her.
The diminished size and total loss of sight
Is in me, not in her,
And just at the moment
When someone at my side says
"She is gone"
There are others who are watching her coming,
And other voices take up a glad shout
"There she comes!"
And that is dying

When I Die and Leave Behind

When I die and leave behind
This earth I love
These trees, this sky,
The pounding sea,
The yearly hope of spring,
Cry not for me,
Rejoice.
My soul has wings
And in it's freedom sings.

You Can Shed Tears That She Is Gone

You can shed tears that she is gone
Or you can smile because she has lived.
You can close your eyes and pray that she'll come back
Or you can open your eyes and see all that she's left.
Your heart can be empty because you can't see her
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 her and only that she's gone
Or you can cherish her memory and let it live on.
You can cry and close your mind, be empty and turn your back
Or you can do what she'd want: smile, open your eyes, love and go on.

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