

We give thanks for our family.  
Our dear family.  
We anger each other.  
We fail each other.  
We share this sad earth, this tender life,  
    this precious time.  
Such richness. Such wildness.  
Together we are blown about.  
Together we are dragged along.  
All this delight.  
All this suffering.  
All this forgiving life.  
We hold it together. Amen.

We give back to you, O God, those whom you gave to us. You did not lose them when you gave them to us, and we do not lose them by their return to you. Your dear son has taught us that life is eternal, and love cannot die. So death is only an horizon, and an horizon is only the limit of our sight. Open our eyes to see more clearly, and draw us closer to you that we may know that we are nearer to our loved ones, who are with you. You have told us that you are preparing a place for us; prepare us also for that place, that where you are we may also be always, O dear Lord of life and death.  
~William Penn

We cannot fall beneath the arms of God.  
However low we fall,  
they are still underneath us.  
    ~William Penn

Think of -  
Stepping on shore, and finding it Heaven!  
Of taking hold of a hand, and finding it God's hand,  
Of breathing new air, and finding it celestial air,  
Of feeling invigorated, and finding it immortality,  
Of passing from storm and tempest to an unbroken calm,  
Of waking up, and finding it Home.

**O**LORD, support us all the day long, until the shadows lengthen and the evening comes, and the busy world is hushed, and the fever of life is over, and our work is done. Then in thy mercy grant us a safe lodging, and a holy rest, and peace at the last. *Amen.*

Lord Jesus Christ, you are the gentle moon and joyful stars that watch over the darkest night. You are the source of all peace, reconciling the whole universe to our God. You are the source of all rest, calming troubled hearts, and bringing sleep to weary bodies. You are the sweetness that fills our minds with quiet joy and can turn the worst nightmares into dreams of heaven. May we dream of your sweetness, rest in your arms, be at one with our God, and be comforted in the knowledge that you always watch over us. Amen.

~Erasmus

We pray, O Lord,  
for all who must soon face death,  
whether by illness, old age, or violence.  
Strengthen them in their fear,  
comfort them in their grief,  
and give them some taste,  
some inkling of the joy  
you have prepared for them.  
Amen.

~Sheila Cassidy

O God, you who in your love have kept me vigorously and joyfully at work in days gone by, and now send me joyful and contented into silence and inactivity, grant that I may find happiness in you in all my solitary and quiet hours. In your strength, O God, I bid farewell to all. The past you know; I leave it at your feet. Grant me grace to respond to your divine call, to leave all that is dear on earth, and to go out alone to you. Behold, I come quickly, says the Lord. Come, Lord Jesus. Amen.

~Prayer of a priest in old age in India

We have known the time for planting, for laughing and for dancing. The joys of happier days can never be taken from us. Let those joys soften the pain of our suffering now. May our acceptance of this time of sadness help to prepare us for future joys with you and with Mary in your Kingdom of peace and love. We ask this through Christ our Lord. Amen.

O suffering Christ, lay your hand in healing power upon those who feel they can bear no more, until their hearts are hushed and quieted, knowing that round about them and underneath them are the Everlasting Arms. Amen.

~Leslie Weatherhead

Into your hands, O merciful Savior, we commend your servant \_\_\_\_\_. Acknowledge, we pray, a sheep of your own flock, a sinner of your own redeeming. Receive her into the arms of your mercy, into the blessed rest of everlasting peace, and into the glorious company of the saints in light. Amen.

Merciful God,  
Loving Mother,  
Guiding Light.  
Let comfort come this night  
    for every wound and distress  
    for every sorrow and uncertainty:  
Your love shines upon us;  
Your love will guard our rest.  
Amen.  
    ~Daniel J. McGill

Let the light of late afternoon  
shine through the chinks in the barn, moving  
up the bales as the sun moves down.

Let the crickets take up chafing  
as a woman takes up her needles  
and her yarn. Let evening come.

Let dew collect on the hoe abandoned  
in the long grass. Let the stars appear  
and the moon disclose her silver horn.

Let the fox go back to its sandy den.  
Let the wind die down. Let the shed  
go black inside. Let evening come.

To the bottle in the ditch, to the scoop  
in the oats, to air in the lung  
let evening come.

Let it come, as it will, and don't  
be afraid. God does not leave us  
comfortless, so let evening come.  
    ~Jane Kenyon

Lord God, the source of all good things,  
we pause in your presence and hold our day before you.  
Still us, calm us, guide us as we enter this day.

May the God who listens to our hearts and enters into our pain bless us and all who are in  
need with the comfort and quiet of her gentle presence, now and always. Amen.  
    ~Marchiene Vroon Rienstra

Help of the tired ones,  
I am in need tonight –  
so weary I can hardly think  
or pray aright;  
but you have known the toil,  
the grief, the strain  
of human suffering,  
and felt the pain  
of utter weariness –  
the sting of tears, fatigue –  
and so you know my need.

I have no words to say,  
but in my heart  
I pray.

~Mary Esther Burgoyne

“God is not only the God of the sufferers but the God who suffers. ... It is said of God that no one can behold his face and live. I always thought this meant that no one could see his splendor and live. A friend said perhaps it meant that no one could see his sorrow and live. Or perhaps his sorrow is splendor. ... Instead of explaining our suffering, God shares it.”

– Nicholas Wolterstorff, Lament for a Son

God of peace,  
relax the tensions of my body...  
still the anxieties of my mind...  
calm the storm of my heart...  
give me courage to wait...  
Let peace flow in me, through me, from me.  
The deep, deep peace of God.

~David Adam

Deep peace, pure white of the moon to you.  
Deep peace, pure green of the grass to you.  
Deep peace, pure brown of the earth to you.  
Deep peace, pure grey of the dew to you.  
Deep peace, pure blue of the sky to you.  
Deep peace, of the running wave to you.  
Deep peace, of the flowing air to you.  
Deep peace, of the quiet earth to you.  
Deep peace, of the shining stars to you.  
Deep peace, of the Son of Peace to you.  
Amen.

Endings come; they always do.  
Goodbye comes. It always does.  
Trees struggle with it in autumn,  
and in our deepest being, so do we.

And as we begin our fallow vigil,  
we recall the truth of the ages:  
Unless the wheat seed dies,  
it cannot sing a new birth.

Endings silence the soul,  
yet not forever,  
For the heart will one day,  
Sing once more.

~Joyce Rupp

Comforter of the desolate,  
the pain of my loss goes deep.  
There is a huge hole in my life,  
a rip in the garment of my heart.  
I cry out in anguish,  
knowing you will not forsake me.  
God of the sorrowing,  
draw close to my desolate soul.  
Mend the hole in my heart.  
Give me strength to go on.  
Bend your compassionate ear  
to the sadness in my heart  
and hear my cry for help.  
Amen.

Lord Christ,  
You are the still center of every storm.  
In you is calm,  
whatever the wind outside.  
In you is reassurance,  
however high the waves.  
In you is strength,  
however contrary the tide.

~Eddie Askew

Watch now, dear Lord,  
with those who wake or watch or weep tonight,  
and give your angels charge over those who sleep.  
Tend your sick ones, O Lord Christ,  
rest your weary ones,  
bless your dying ones, soothe your suffering ones,  
pity your afflicted ones, shield your joyous ones,  
and all for your love's sake.  
Amen.

~St. Augustine

Love never disappears for death is a non-event. I have merely retired to the room next door. You and I are the same; what we were for each other, we still are. Speak to me as you always have, do not use a different tone, do not be sad. Continue to laugh at what made us laugh. Smile and think of me. Life means what it has always meant. The link is not severed. Why should I be out of your soul if I am out of your sight? I will wait for you; I am not here, but just on the other side of this path. You see, all is well.

~St. Augustine

Companion of the sorrowful,  
be my strength  
as I say my goodbyes.  
Be my courage  
as I face what needs  
to be let go.  
Be my patience  
as I trudge along  
through empty days.  
Be my consolation  
as I carry sadness  
in my heart.  
Be my hope  
as I turn from the tomb  
and walk into the future.  
Be near, O God, be near.  
Amen.

All shall be Amen and Alleluia.  
We shall rest and we shall see.  
We shall see and we shall know.  
We shall know and we shall love.  
We shall love and we shall praise.  
Behold our end which is no end.

~St. Augustine

As Thou wast before  
At my life's beginning,  
Be Thou so again  
    At my journey's end.

As Thou wast besides  
At my soul's shaping,  
Father, be Thou too  
    At my journey's close.

Be with me a-watching  
Each evening and morning,  
And allure me home  
    To the land of the saints.  
    ~Carmina Gadelica