

HELPING YOU EVERY STEP OF THE WAY



Non-religious funeral readings



Dignity Funerals

0808 231 7126 | www.dignityfunerals.co.uk

“When I Am Dead, My Dearest” by Christina Rossetti

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.

“The Life That I Have” by Leo Marks

The life that I have
Is all that I have
And the life that I have
Is yours.

The love that I have
Of the life that I have
Is yours and yours and yours.

A sleep I shall have
A rest I shall have
Yet death will be but a pause
For the peace of my years
In the long green grass
Will be yours and yours and yours.

“Death (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.

“Roads Go Ever On” by J. R. R. Tolkien

Roads go ever ever on,
Over rock and under tree,
By caves where never sun has shone,
By streams that never find the sea;
Over snow by winter sown,
And through the merry flowers of June,
Over grass and over stone,
And under mountains in the moon.

Roads go ever ever on
Under cloud and under star,
Yet feet that wandering have gone
Turn at last to home afar.
Eyes that fire and sword have seen
And horror in the halls of stone
Look at last on meadows green
And trees and hills they long have known.

Roads go ever on and on
Out from the door where it began.
Now far ahead the Road has gone,
Let others follow it who can!
Let them a journey new begin,
But I at last with weary feet
Will turn towards the lighted inn,
My evening-rest and sleep to meet.

“Death Sets a Thing Significant” by Emily Dickinson

Death sets a thing significant
The eye had hurried by,
Except a perished creature
Entreat us tenderly

To ponder little workmanships
In crayon or in wool,
With “This was last her fingers did,”
Industrious until

The thimble weighed too heavy,
The stitches stopped themselves,
And then ‘t was put among the dust
Upon the closet shelves.

A book I have, a friend gave,
Whose pencil, here and there,
Had notched the place that pleased him,--
At rest his fingers are.

Now, when I read, I read not,
For interrupting tears
Obliterate the etchings
Too costly for repairs.

“Play Jolly Music At My Funeral” by Richard Greene

I've taken in recent years to thinking about my funeral
and have decided to make one paramount request:
play jolly music at that ritual.
What good does it do to heap on dirges
or other mournful melodies?
I won't be there to be gratified by the grieving
and if I could tune in
I'd be happier to see those present have some relief.
Dixieland would be nice.
Joplin would be fine.
Something by Fats Waller would certainly do.
Those early jazzmen knew what they were up to
when they set about making funeral marches swing.
So swing me away, please, with a rousing tune.

“Dear Lovely Death” by Langston Hughes

Dear lovely Death
That taketh all things under wing—
Never to kill—
Only to change
Into some other thing
This suffering flesh,
To make it either more or less,
But not again the same—
Dear lovely Death,
Change is thy other name.

“Requiem” by Robert Louis Stevenson

Under the wide and starry sky,
Dig the grave and let me die.
Glad did I live and gladly die,
And I laid me down with a will

This be the verse you grave for me:
Here lies where he longed to be;
Home is the sailor, home from sea,
And the hunter home from the hill.

“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 so bright as he 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 reassumed.

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.

“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's 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.

“Intimations of Immortality” by William Wordsworth

What though the radiance which was once so bright~
Be now forever taken from my sight,
Though nothing can bring back the hour
Of splendour in the grass, of glory in the flower;
We will grieve not, rather find
Strength in what remains behind.

“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 airplanes 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 forever: 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.

“She Is Gone” by David Harkins

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 will come back
Or you can open your eyes and see all that she has left
Your heart can be empty because you can't see her
Or you can be full of the love that 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 is 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 would want: smile, open your eyes, love and go on.

“No Matter What” by Debi Gliori

Small said: “But what about when you're dead and gone? Would you love me then? Does love go on?”
Large held Small snug as they looked out at the night, at the moon in the dark and the stars shining bright.
Small, look at the stars – how they shine and glow. Yet some of those stars died a long time ago. Still they shine in the evening skies... love, like starlight, never dies.