

Quotes, Poems & Readings For Your Funeral Ceremony or Memorial Service

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Commonwealth Registered Marriage Celebrant

- Phone: 0409 285 685
- Web: www.craftedceremonies.com.au
- Email: craftedceremonies@gmail.com
- Location: 36 Pavo St, Belmont VIC 3216

Quotes from TV Series or Movies

“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.

Poems & Passages

“After Glow” by author unknown

I'd like the memory of me
To be a happy one.

I'd like to leave an afterglow
Of smiles when life is done.

I'd like to leave an echo,
Whispering softly down the ways.

Of happy times and laughing times
And bright and sunny days.

I'd like the tears of those who grieve
To dry before the sun.

Of happy memories that I leave
When my life is done.

“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.

“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.

“A Funeral Reading for Difficult People” by Kim Forrester

This is the time that tradition says we must stand and sing your praises,
Share tales of achievements and weep at the fond memories.
But what good are these pleasantries and platitudes
When they are written for someone we didn't know;
When they speak of a potential that was never fully realised.
Not in this lifetime.
A life worth speaking of is not always one of inspiration and success.
There is dignity in the struggle of being human.
There is unfathomable strength in rising to endure each day
When those days are not steeped in hope and promise
But in despair, loneliness, and pain.
And there is authentic beauty in a life
That is tangled, complicated and confronting.
So no, we will not patronise you
With artificial words of joy, laughter and connection.
We will not render you invisible
So that we may be socially acceptable and painfully pleasant.
Instead, we will stand here, in the space you allowed for us.
We will honour you for the man you were able to be.
We will dignify you and the life that you had the capacity to live.
And we will shed tears for the many ways you touched our lives
In raw, real, joyful, painful, and complicated ways.
Son, brother, uncle, cousin, friend.
Humanly vulnerable, and perfectly imperfect.
Life battered you, and bruised you, and beckoned you on,
And formed you into the man we must now farewell.
We ask you to pass peacefully to the heavens above.
And know that, through it all, you have been loved.

“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.

“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.

“How Do I Love Thee?” by Elizabeth Barret Browning

How do I love thee? Let me count the ways.

I love thee to the depth and breadth and height

My soul can reach, when feeling out of sight

For the ends of being and ideal grace.

I love thee to the level of every day's

Most quiet need, by sun and candle-light.

I love thee freely, as men strive for right.

I love thee purely, as they turn from praise.

I love thee with the passion put to use

In my old griefs, and with my childhood's faith.

I love thee with a love I seemed to lose

With my lost saints. I love thee with the breath,

Smiles, tears, of all my life; and, if God choose,

I shall but love thee better after death.

“Not In Vain” by Emily Dickinson

If I can stop one heart from breaking, I shall not live in vain:

If I can ease one life the aching, Or cool one pain,

Or help one fainting robin

Unto his nest again,

I shall not live in vain.

“Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night” by Dylan Thomas

Do not go gentle into that good night,

Old age should burn and rave at close of day;

Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Though wise men at their end know dark is right,

Because their words had forked no lightning they

Do not go gentle into that good night.

Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright

Their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,

Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,

And learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,

Do not go gentle into that good night.

Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight

Blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,

Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

And you, my father, there on the sad height,

Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears, I pray.

Do not go gentle into that good night.

Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

“Parable on Immortality” by Henry Van Dyke

I am standing upon the seashore. A ship at my side spreads her white sails to the morning breeze and starts for the blue ocean. She is an object of beauty and strength. I stand and watch until at last she hangs like a speck of white cloud just where the sea and the sky come down to mingle with each other. Then someone at my side says, “There she goes.”

Gone where? Gone from my sight...that is all. She is just as large in mast and hull and spar as she was when she left my side and just as able to bear her load of living freight to the place of destination. Her diminished size is in me, not in her. And just at the moment when someone at my side says, “There she goes”, there are other eyes watching her coming and other voices ready to take up the glad shout, “Here she comes!”

“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.

Extract from ‘The Excursion’ by William Wordsworth

And when the stream that overflows has passed,
A consciousness remains upon the silent shore of memory;
Images and precious thoughts that shall not be
And cannot be destroyed.

“Death is Nothing at All” by Henry Scott-Holland

Death is nothing at all.
I have only slipped away to 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
which you always used.
Put no difference into 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 a shadow on it.

Life means all that it ever meant.
It is the same that it ever was.
There is absolute unbroken continuity.
Why should I be out of mind?
because I am out of sight?

I am but waiting for you.
For an interval.
Somewhere. Very near.
Just around the corner.

All is well.
Nothing is past; nothing is lost.
One brief moment and all will be as it was before.
How we shall laugh at the trouble of parting when we meet again!

“Requiem” by Robert Louis Stevenson

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

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

Native American Prayer

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 glint on snow.
I am the sunlight on ripened grain.
I am the gentle autumn rain.
When you wake in the morning hush,
I am the swift, uplifting rush
Of quiet birds in circling flight.
I am the soft starlight at night.
Do not stand at my grave and cry.
I am not there. I did not die.

Readings with Humour

“A Long Cup of Tea” by Michael Ashby

Death is too negative for me

So I'll be popping off for a long cup of tea

Do splash out on two bags in the pot

And for god's sake keep the water hot

“Last Will & Testament” by Will Scratchmann

And as I sit upon my cloud and look down at the earth

I'll watch you use my worldly goods for festival and mirth

And that will make me smile a smile, and have a laugh quite hearty

To hear you say, the bugger's dead, let's have ourselves a party!