



COMMUNITY VOICE



Welcome...

...to the first edition of the Pearl Collective's *Community Voice*, a quarterly newsletter about living and dying. Pearl Collective is a collective of people, organizations, and businesses who assist individuals, families, and pets in the end-of-life transition. We guide people through their approach to death using love, wisdom, knowledge, law, and strength.

We invite you to engage by reading and contributing to our community newsletter at **pearlcollective@gmail.com**. Help make this a larger community voice!

Inside

THIS ISSUE

- 2 Folklore Tradition
- 3 End-of-Life Options
- 3 Prayer
- 4 Who has a Say?
- 5 Poetry
- 5 Summer Reads
- 6 Natural Burial
- 7 Summer Events

TELLING THE BEES

Folklore, Tradition, and Ritual
with Bree Sadira Rose

The 18th and 19th centuries in New England and Western Europe were a time and place in history when it was not uncommon for every household to have a farm, of which an apiary was an important feature. The bees residing there were held in high regard and considered a part of the family.

If there was a death in the beekeeper's household, or if the beekeeper himself perished, it was believed to be of vital importance to inform the bees about this event and include them in mourning, lest they become sickly, stop producing honey, or abandon the hive altogether. Each hive would be approached individually, with a gentle knock, sometimes using the key to the house, and a whisper, song, or rhyme revealing the name of the departed. The hives would then be invited to join in the mourning with a covering of black crepe material, sometimes being turned so that their openings faced the home if the body was kept for a wake.

In the 1850s, John Greenleaf Whittier expressed this tradition in his poem, *Telling the Bees*:

*Before them, under a garden wall,
Forward and back,
Went drearily singing the chore-girl small,
Draping each hive with a shred of black."*

As the DIY culture of the Pacific Northwest lends itself to the resurgence of home apiaries, perhaps we can keep in mind that a gentle knock and whisper to alert the hive of a family death couldn't hurt, and that the bees may truly appreciate being included in mourning.



Do you practice
specific traditions
or rituals related
to death?

Please share
your stories
and photos
for the next issue.

[pearlcollective@
gmail.com](mailto:pearlcollective@gmail.com)



Improved End-of-Life Options

Honoring Choices Pacific Northwest

Persistence pays off! After three years Washington State has expanded options around end-of-life care and planning. EHB 1175 was signed by Governor Inslee in May and went into effect on July 28, 2019.

Two Critical Changes

- Extends the decision-making hierarchy, outlined in a printable poster version on page 4, to include grandchildren, nieces and nephews, aunts and uncles, as well as a close friend. ** All decision-making members must agree to the same care. In the case of a close friend, certain criteria must be met, including a declaration, which is subject to perjury laws.
- The Health Care Directive section (often referred to as a Living Will) has added a notary option for completion. Now either witnesses or a notary can complete the directive.

More loved ones making decisions and more options for completing documents means more people can get end-of-life care that honors their values and preferences.

A P R A Y E R
F R O M
R A B B I
R A M I M .
S H A P I R O

*Submitted by:
Jennifer Kropack*

Life and death,
a twisted vine sharing a single root.

A water bright green
stretching to top a twisted yellow
only to wither itself
as another green unfolds overhead.

One leaf atop another
yet under the next,
a vibrant tapestry of arcs and falls
all in the act of becoming.

Death is the passing of life.
And life
is the stringing together of so many little passings.

Decision-Making Hierarchy

What happens if I don't choose a health care agent?

Washington State law lists who will make health care decisions for you if you cannot.

The order for who will decide is:



A guardian appointed by the state



Named **health care agent** with health care decision-making authority in the advance directive



Your **spouse** or **registered domestic partner**
(even if separated)



Your **adult children** *



Your **parents** *



Your **adult siblings** *



Your **adult grandchildren** *



Your **adult nieces
& nephews** *



Your **adult aunts
& uncles** *



A **close friend**
who meets
certain criteria

***Any group that has
more than one person:
all in the group must
agree to the care**



Scan for more information about
the Washington State law



/HonoringChoicesPNW



@HCPNW



honoringchoicespnw.org



Honoring Choices®
PACIFIC NORTHWEST

AN INITIATIVE OF



Washington State
Hospital Association



MWH Foundation

Stay dry, my relic

Carrie Redway

Thunder,
the tender thunder—
brazen like a slammed door but
soft like a mother's wisdom.

I wore a snail around my neck
in a small canvas bag tied
with a delicate ribbon. It rested on my collarbone.
An old French folktale says to wear a snail in a bag
around the neck to cure a fever.

grief was the fever
regret was the fever
solitude was the fever
even ghosts brought their own fever,
Grandmother's flames.

A humid summer night,
lightning snapped the sky
and the snail jumped—
wind tore through the room
and the bag swung, heavy—
mother's flames now, always a reminder
to quell the heat.

The snail bounced against my chest:
Untie the ribbon, she whispered. I cradled the bag

but I would reserve watching
the snail's slow, slick
trail to the mud puddle
for another day.

I was not ready.

I knew she could not cure my fever.

Originally published by Sick Lit Magazine

Book suggestions for Summer 2019

Reimagining Death

STORIES AND PRACTICAL WISDOM FOR HOME FUNERALS
AND GREEN BURIALS

BY LUCINDA HERRING; FOREWORD BY DAVID SPANGLER

"We cannot heal our relationships with the natural world, others, and ourselves until we heal our relationship with death and grief. With *Reimagining Death*, Lucinda Herring charts a course for this essential healing."

—Brian Flowers, funeral director and founder
of The Meadow Natural Burial Ground

Die Wise

A MANIFESTO FOR SANITY AND SOUL

BY STEPHEN JENKINSON

"*Die Wise* is a formidable body of work, road-tested in ways most of us hope never to know about. Stay with it, hold the sorrow as the gift it is, savor in small, immense chunks."

—Dr. Martin Shaw

Being Mortal

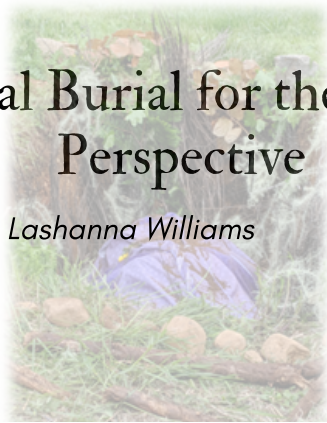
ATUL GAWANDE

'Being Mortal' is a superb book. It does not bog itself down in technical medical jargon but is written for the average person. It is not a self-help book but I imagine it will be therapeutic and helpful to most readers.

.—Franklin the Mousel

Natural Burial for the Living Perspective

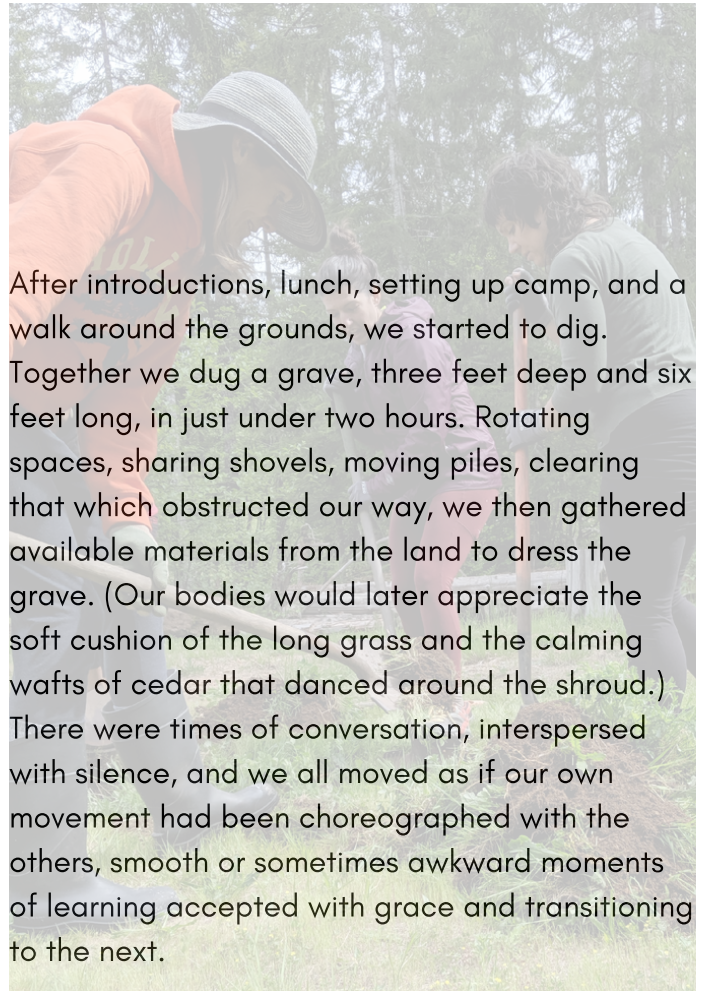
Lashanna Williams



Educating people about anything related to death and dying can be really tricky. We are always bravely playing with new ways for our crew, A Sacred Passing, to engage with people about death, dying, and living. Creating a Natural Burial experience for the living was an exercise in adventurous thought. How do we engage? How do we give back to the land? How do we tell people they are going to dig a grave and lay in it, without scaring them away? As with death, we employ radical honesty.

In the name of radical honesty, for me, having to trust, heading into the unknown, and hanging with strangers in the woods are three things that I have to work very hard to be comfortable with. But then, people have to work really hard to get comfortable with death, too. And it wasn't long into the warm Spring morning ferry ride to Southworth, before the smell of the Puget Sound kissed my nose, the wind had its way with my hair, and I felt the weekend was going to be just right.

The idea of being buried in the ground scared me as a child (it still does, a little). I'd start to itch incessantly when I thought of all the bugs crawling on me. (Sorry if you are itching now) We arrived at the magical space near the Olympic National Forest, where pockets of natural whimsy are cultivated and tucked in to the earth by loving hands, creating living altars around this little sweet space off the grid.



After introductions, lunch, setting up camp, and a walk around the grounds, we started to dig. Together we dug a grave, three feet deep and six feet long, in just under two hours. Rotating spaces, sharing shovels, moving piles, clearing that which obstructed our way, we then gathered available materials from the land to dress the grave. (Our bodies would later appreciate the soft cushion of the long grass and the calming wafts of cedar that danced around the shroud.) There were times of conversation, interspersed with silence, and we all moved as if our own movement had been choreographed with the others, smooth or sometimes awkward moments of learning accepted with grace and transitioning to the next.

We each got in the grave by ourselves but were shrouded by others, just tight enough to feel like a gentle full-body hug. A crackling fire and bird talk laced through the silence and music. An ant crawled into my shroud, just over my nose and down my face. It was such an exercise in the power of thought and experience. That ant did its thing, and I did mine. As I looked up from inside the shroud, the outlines of the people standing around the grave were like trees, rooted around me, keeping me safe. After we were unshrouded, some crawled out themselves and others welcomed an outstretched hand.

It was like what I dream the active dying process will feel like: a bit of nervousness about the unknown and the lack of control, but surrounded with a supportive network that cares about the process, followed by the feeling of warm sun and crisp air on the other side.

Summer Events

August

5

Greenwood Death Cafe

6-8pm at Makeda & Mingus
More information:
<https://www.facebook.com/greenwood.death.cafe/> ;
<https://deathcafe.com>

17

Common Bond Book Club:
Die Wise

10:30am-12:30pm at Makeda & Mingus
More information:
<https://www.facebook.com/events/681201252341907/>

20

West Seattle Death Cafe

7:30pm- 8:30pm at Nepenthe
More information:
Vist West Seattle Death Cafe on facebook
<https://deathcafe.com>

22

Coffee with a Death
Midwife

10am - 12pm at Burien Press
More information:
May curiosity and a desire for coffee get you to come join me.

September

9

Greenwood Death Cafe

6-8pm at Makeda & Mingus
More information:
<https://www.facebook.com/greenwood.death.cafe/> ;
<https://deathcafe.com>

17

West Seattle Death Cafe

7:30pm- 8:30pm at Nepenthe
More information:
Vist West Seattle Death Cafe on facebook
<https://deathcafe.com>



Save the Month of October



www.deathsploration.com