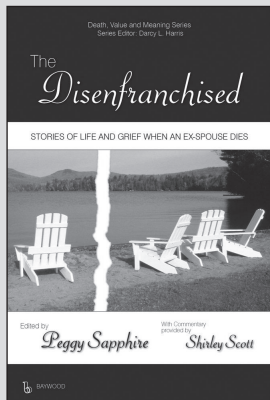


# Book Reviews



## The disenfranchised: stories of life and grief when an ex-spouse dies

Peggy Sapphire (editor)  
with commentary by  
Shirley Scott

Amtyville, New York: Baywood  
Publishing Company, Inc.  
2013  
221pp  
£27.50  
ISBN: 980 0 89503 822 7

This powerful book will be of real value to anyone who works with the complex issues surrounding the grief and loss of an ex-partner. It will also help those and their children who are living through the grieving process following the death of an ex-husband or partner. I have recently been involved with two women who had raised many of the issues that this book highlights; both liked the quote in the introduction: 'if you think that the widow has it tough, you should see the ex-spouse'.

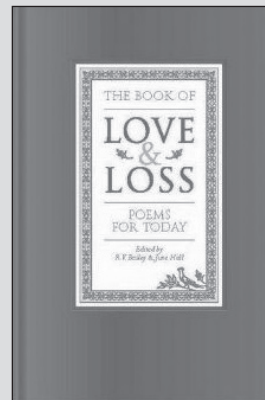
Writers were invited to include their poetry, published or unpublished within their narrative. The ensuing book is a series of poems and narratives that enables those involved to tell their story in whatever way they choose. In each chapter there is a preface, followed by the story which is told in in prose or poetry, an epilogue, and finally a commentary. Together this paints a picture of the story which the bereaved woman wants to portray. It reminded some of the good times and the love that they had known, but equally for others brought back the memories of what had been a devastating loss. Many of the women found that writing offered a release and was a therapeutic process.

As a resource it is very useful, easy to read, moving, and offers a toolkit of strategies that work.

I was unable to find a similar work; it is unique. I thoroughly recommend it to grief counsellors and bereaved families. ■

### Ruth Harrison

Independent bereavement therapist



## The book of love and loss: poems for today

RV Bailey and June Hall  
(eds)

Bath: Belgrave Press  
2014  
384 pp  
£12.99  
ISBN 978 0 9546215 2 0

This is a very modern, or post-modern (if that is possible), view of love and death; matter-of-fact, unsentimental, in your face. Ignoring the shibboleths of the past, the assumption of eternal life in a better or worse place. It picks over the ruins, fascinated by the realisation that the dead live on in the minds of those who love and survive.

Of grief Sara-Jane Arbury writes:

'I can't help stroking it  
Making a pet of it.  
It owns me.'

Or RV Bailey (one of the editors):

'Well brought-up women don't cry. I tuck  
The bits of my heart in my pocket,  
Tidily, and remember I must  
Say thank you to the nurse.'

Wanda Barford, in a poem that starts

'I'd love to phone you...'

and ends

'But here I go, I'm talking too much,  
spending too long on the phone again.  
Goodness knows what the cost will be  
over such a long distance...'

And we're barely half way through the letter B, for this is a string of pearls in alphabetical order of poets, most of whose names are new to me.

But one I know, the Poet Laureate, Carol Ann Duffy, who writes of snow men and kissing cold cheeks and a cold nose...

‘But nothing so cold as the February night I opened the door  
in the Chapel of Rest where my mother lay, neither young, not old  
where my lips, returning her kiss to her brow, knew the meaning of cold’.

Bereavement may be the toughest road we travel, and today’s poets do not pretend, but grief gives birth to nostalgia, a mixed emotion in which laughter breaks surprisingly and out of which we grow older and wiser as we draw on our bank of memories to find a new place for those we love. As UA Fanthorpe puts it:

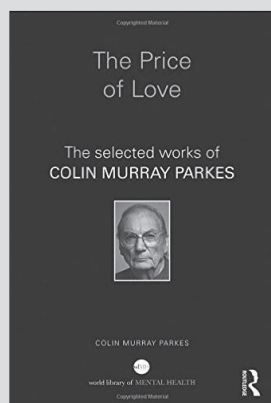
‘...I don’t expect  
A second coming, or need one. Enough  
Once in a lifetime to be part of the song’.

This is a book to treasure and come back to day by day. It is complementary to *All in the end is harvest*, a collection of poems and quotations brought together by Agnes Whitaker and covering a much wider time scale, but with similar depth and sensitivity. Both of these books fit well Maureen Lipman’s description of these pages of poetry as ‘a pace-maker for the broken heart.’ ■

### Colin Murray Parkes

President for Life of Cruse Bereavement Care, Emeritus  
Consultant Psychiatrist to St Christopher's Hospice.

Whitaker A (1984). *All in the end is harvest: an anthology for those who grieve*. Darton, Longman & Todd Ltd.



### The price of love – the selected works of Colin Murray Parkes

Colin Murray Parkes

London & New York: Routledge  
2015  
231pp  
pb £31.99 hb £95  
ISBN (pb): 9 7811 3802 6100

Colin Murray Parkes introduces this book by providing a rationale for the selection of his published work which spans an extensive and influential career and says: ‘I have tried to balance the historical significance of my ideas against their current

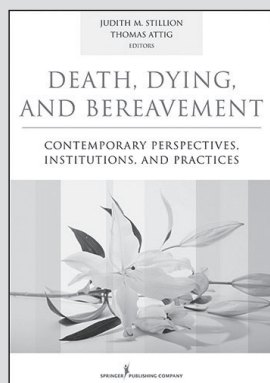
readability and relevance’. The resulting volume is a treasury of material from which we see both the stature and the humanity of a man who has, and continues to, inspire researchers and practitioners alike.

The writing does not follow a chronological sequence but is used to address five key themes, each of which the author introduces by reflecting on the evolving insights and contemporary perspectives which characterise them. In the ten chapters which make up *Part 1: Love and grief*, foundational concepts, including attachment theory, and links between bereavement research and practice, set the tone of the book with the often poetic and philosophical breadth that is the hallmark of the rest of the book. *Part 2: Crisis, trauma and transition* widens the scope to consider the causes of grief beyond bereavement and contextualises those experiences within transition theory including Parkes’ own concept of revisions to the assumptive world. *Part 3: Death and dying* provides two chapters which examine attachment at the end of life both between patients and their relatives and between patients and staff. Tribute is paid in this section to Dame Cicely Saunders, the colleague and friend with whom Parkes’ worked over many years at St Christopher’s Hospice, gaining a world-wide reputation for their understanding of the needs of dying people and bereaved family/friends. *Part 4: Disasters*, while set within theoretical considerations includes moving accounts of Parkes’ experience in Aberfan following the tragic deaths of over a hundred people, mainly children, when the village school was buried under coal waste, and of the human aftermath of the boxing-day tsunami in the Indian Ocean. Finally, in *Part 5: War and terrorism: breaking the cycle of violence* the conceptual links are made between trauma, death and bereavement, and terrorism, genocide and armed conflict. These man-made causes of grief are not described without hope. With notions of reconciliation and breaking cycles of violence comes the challenge of both conceiving of these possibilities and the will to make them happen. Parkes ends the book by concluding that, ‘Rather than being the context of suffering, love can become the key to our understanding it better and helping those afflicted by it’ (p229).

This is a very significant publication containing the theoretical and practice insights of Colin Murray Parkes which have been laboured over and honed over many decades. But the book is not written as a triumphal journey’s end but as a story with sign-posts to many chapters still to be written. It has been a privilege to spend time exploring the depth of ideas and the humanity of the author in this life’s work compendium. I commend it to all practitioners and researchers, urging all services to have this on their book shelves for constant reference. ■

### Linda Machin

Honorary Research Fellow, Keele University



**Death, dying and bereavement: contemporary perspectives, institutions and practices**

Judith M Stillion and Thomas Attig (eds)

Springer Publishing Company, LLC  
2015  
428pp  
£59.50  
ISBN: 978 0 8261 7141 2

This well-presented and comprehensive book brings together in one volume a wealth of knowledge and insights from 28 distinguished authors, including William Worden and Colin Murray Parkes. Their contributions are divided into three parts dealing with Intellectual, Institutional and Practice developments in the field of death, dying and bereavement. The chapter headings are clear and the work is well indexed.

Many of the contributors movingly describe the impact of personal loss in their own lives and how this has influenced their choice of work and provided a source of motivation. Thomas Attig in his *Introduction* presents a chronology of developments in the death, dying and bereavement movement since 1955 providing a useful context for the rest of the book, as well as a resource for further reading. It also highlights the commitment of the pioneers, whose persistence has led to the breakdown of some of the taboos surrounding the subject, and has led to more discussion and debate in society generally, especially over some of the ethical dilemmas faced as a result of advances in health technology.

The breadth of subject matter covered is impressive, incorporating theoretical perspectives and research from psychology, sociology and thanatology. Topics include hospice and palliative care; funeral services; death education; support for the dying; suicide; and responding to grief and trauma in the aftermath of disaster. Ethical issues are addressed, as is care for the whole family, including resources for children.

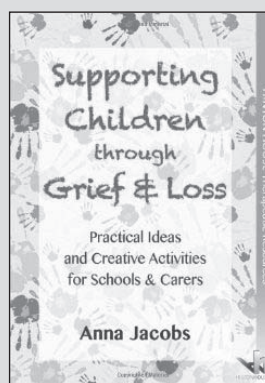
The majority of authors are from the US, where their research was conducted. This means that there are some differences from the UK experience. James Werth, for example, looks at legal issues in end-of-life decision making and cites US case law and legislation. Leeat Granek, looking at the media coverage in such programmes as the Oprah Winfrey Show and some American films, sees the tendency to pathologise grief and lead people to regard it as a medical problem, likely to require medication or therapy.

The differences, however, tend not to detract from the overall impact of the book.

A particular feature of this book is the afterword, which shares the editors' hopes and concerns about the future of the death, dying and bereavement movement. Overall, it is a good source of reference and would make a significant addition to any library. ■

**Wendy Laughlin**

Bereavement Volunteer



**Supporting children through grief and loss: practical ideas and creative activities for schools and carers**

**Supporting teenagers through grief and loss: practical ideas and creative activities for schools and carers**

Anna Jacobs

Buckingham, England: Hinton House Publishers  
2013  
190/230pp  
£29.99  
ISBN: 978 1 906531539 / 978 1 906531591

These delightful and useful books are written by a play therapist and creative arts therapist/counsellor, passionate about the needs of bereaved children and young people. The author has supported bereaved children for over 15 years, and has established innovative cancer and palliative care services for children and young people in Lancashire, Cumbria and the South West of England. They have been developed as a response to professionals and carers who were trying to support grieving youngsters, but who were unsure of the best way forward in dealing with the process, or even working out what is a taboo subject – 'do I mention the word death?'

Both follow the same pattern, with content that is age appropriate. The introductions reflect on the issues of grief and loss in childhood and as a young person, and the way society can rise to the occasion but mainly fails to recognise the issues, leaving them without the support they need. The books are targeted at those working with children aged

between 5-11, and young people aged from 11 upwards, and are directed at exploring all forms of loss, not just bereavement. Primarily focused at support in the school environment, the tools are applicable to all professionals, carers, parents and bereavement volunteers.

*Supporting children* has chapters on theories of bereavement and loss, and how death is understood at different ages and stages of development. It moves on to practical issues such as the types of questions children ask, and how to answer them, the different ways children express loss and how they can be supported, practical suggestions for helping children suffering a loss, and then a toolkit of exercises and practical, creative activities.

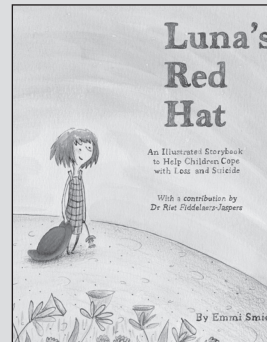
*Supporting teenagers* includes similar content looking at adolescent development and theories of bereavement and loss, and the grief process in adolescence and its implications. There is a good chapter on the practical side of how adolescents express loss and how to support them, questions and comments from adolescents, followed by a tool kit of age appropriate creative activities. Many of the adolescent activities would also be suitable for using with adults.

Both address mild and severe reactions to loss – including physical, emotional and psychological responses. There is guidance on using the activities, and sheets that can be photocopied. Both offer a sample bereavement policy that can be used in a school setting, with a template for letters to parents and a general assembly in the school. *Supporting teenagers* also has guidance on anti-bullying policies, as well as further reading and website resources. There is also a list of suggested music, poetry and art resources which address sadness, anger or relaxation. Leonard Cohen's *Suzanne* makes the list for sadness, as does Pink Floyd's *The Wall* for anger.

Both books are full of useful materials, and the theoretical approaches are dealt with concisely and in a down-to-earth manner. Some of the creative activities are well known and some were new to me, and they have added value from the guidance offered prior to the activity and suggestions of support that can be offered. I have recently reviewed several bereavement resource books for children and adolescents; each of them has had a slightly different approach and all are valuable when looking for a range of resources that are sensitive to the clients' needs. However these two books are very comprehensive, and a good starting point. ■

### Janet Dowling

Bereavement Volunteer



### Luna's Red Hat

Emmi Smid

London: Jessica Kingsley Publishers  
2015  
34pp  
£11.99  
ISBN: 978 1 84905 629 8

This is a lovely little story about the feelings that a young girl has a while after her mother has taken her own life. It is designed to be read with children from the age of six years old. It is beautifully illustrated. It shows very nicely how the event colours the girl's thoughts more generally on a particular day. The girl's father is kind, calm and completely open with her, offering reassurance and validation with no avoidance. I liked it so much that I wish it had been longer, but it is short and sweet which means that young children are more likely to be able to engage wholly with it. At the back of the book there is a very short advice section for parents and carers of children who are bereaved by suicide; parents and carers who would like further advice would probably do well to refer to Winston's Wish excellent booklet *Beyond the rough rock*. ■

### David Trickey

Consultant Clinical Psychologist

Stubbs D, Stokes J, Baker H (2008). *Beyond the rough rock: supporting a child who has been bereaved through suicide*. Winston's Wish.