

Arrivals + Departures

Adult books exploring death, grief and survival.

During YARA + DAVINA's research phase for Arrivals + Departures they discovered many beautiful and powerful books that touched on themes of birth and death. Here is a collection of adult books that explore departures in terms of death and grief ranging from guide books and novels to poetry and picture books.

With the End in Mind, Kathryn Mannix

'Impossible to read with dry eyes or an unaltered mindset' *Sunday Times*

How should we think of death and how can we prepare for it?

With the End in Mind is a book for us all: the grieving and bereaved, the ill and the healthy. By turns touching and tragic, funny and wise, it tells powerful human stories of life and death.

Eric, the retired head teacher who even with Motor Neurone Disease gets things done. Sylvie, 19 and diagnosed with leukaemia, sewing a cushion for her mum to hold after she has died. Nelly and Joe, two people enduring loneliness to shield their beloveds from distress.

A powerful and emotional book based on a lifetime's clinical experience, *With the End in Mind* offers calm, wise advice on how to face death, live fully and find a model for hope in dark times.

Being Mortal, Atul Gawande

For most of human history, death was a common, ever-present possibility. It didn't matter whether you were five or fifty - every day was a roll of the dice. But now, as medical advances push the boundaries of survival further each year, we have become increasingly detached from the reality of being mortal. So here is a book about the modern experience of mortality - about what it's like to get old and die, how medicine has changed this and how it hasn't, where our ideas about death have gone wrong. With his trademark mix of perceptiveness and sensitivity, Atul Gawande outlines a story that crosses the globe, as he examines his experiences as a surgeon and those of his patients and family, and learns to accept the limits of what he can do.

Never before has aging been such an important topic. The systems that we have put in place to manage our mortality are manifestly failing; but, as Gawande reveals, it doesn't have to be this way. The ultimate goal, after all, is not a good death, but a good life - all the way to the very end.

Published in partnership with the Wellcome Collection, a free visitor destination that explores the connections between medicine, life and art.

The way we die now, Seamus O'Mahony

We have lost the ability to deal with death. Most of our friends and beloved relations will die in a busy hospital in the care of strangers, doctors and nurses they have known at best for a couple of weeks.

They may not even know they are dying, victims of the kindly lie that there is still hope.

They are unlikely to see even their family doctor in their final hours, robbed of their dignity and fed through a tube after a long series of excessive and hopeless medical interventions.

This is the starting point of Seamus O'Mahoney's thoughtful, moving and unforgettable book on the western way of death.

Dying has never been more public, with celebrities writing detailed memoirs of their illness, but in private we have done our best to banish all thought of dying and made a good death increasingly difficult to achieve.

My year of magical thinking, Joan Didion

Several days before Christmas 2003, John Gregory Dunne and Joan Didion saw their only daughter, Quintana, fall ill. At first they thought it was flu, then pneumonia, then complete septic shock. She was put into an induced coma and placed on life support. Days later – the night before New Year's Eve – the Dunes were just sitting down to dinner after visiting the hospital when John suffered a massive and fatal coronary. In a second, this close, symbiotic partnership of 40 years was over. Four weeks later, their daughter pulled through. Two months after that, arriving at LA airport, she collapsed and underwent six hours of brain surgery at UCLA Medical Centre to relieve a massive hematoma.

This powerful book is Didion's 'attempt to make sense of the weeks and then months that cut loose any fixed idea I ever had about death, about illness ... about marriage and children and memory ... about the shallowness of sanity, about life itself'. The result is an exploration of an intensely personal yet universal experience: a portrait of a marriage, and a life, in good times and bad.

When breath becomes air, Paul Kalanithi

One day he was a doctor treating the dying, the next he was a patient struggling to live. When *Breath Becomes Air* chronicles Kalanithi's transformation from a medical student asking what makes a virtuous and meaningful life into a neurosurgeon working in the core of human identity - the brain - and finally into a patient and a new father. What makes life worth living in the face of death?

A Grief Observed, CS Lewis

A Grief Observed comprises the reflections of the great scholar and Christian on the death of his wife after only a few short years of marriage.

Painfully honest in its dissection of his thoughts and feelings, this is a book that details his paralysing grief, bewilderment and sense of loss in simple and moving prose. Invaluable as an insight into the grieving process just as much as it is as an exploration of religious doubt, *A Grief Observed* will continue to offer its consoling insights to a huge range of readers, as it has for over fifty years. 'A classic of the genre, a literary answer to the pain of loss.' Robert McCrum

It's OK that you're not OK, Megan Devine

In 2009, on a beautiful sunny day, Megan Devine witnessed the accidental drowning of her beloved partner Matt. "All my professional experience as a therapist felt meaningless," she writes. "Grief literature is loaded with well-intended advice that can actually worsen and extend someone's pain. We just don't know how to handle loss in our culture." Megan has dedicated herself to helping people find a new way to deal with loss that honors our experience without trying to "solve" grief.

With *It's OK That You're Not OK*, Megan reveals a path for navigating grief and loss not by trying to escape it, but by learning to live inside of it with more grace and strength. Through stories, research, life tips, and mindfulness-based practices, she offers a unique guide through an experience we all must face. Here she debunks the culturally prescribed goal of returning to a normal, "happy" life, replacing it with the skills and tools to help us experience and witness the pain of loss in ourselves and others--so we may meet our grief knowing it to be a natural step in the greater journey of love.

The Wild Edge of Sorrow, Francis Weller

Noted psychotherapist Francis Weller provides an essential guide for navigating the deep waters of sorrow and loss in this lyrical yet practical handbook for mastering the art of grieving. Describing how Western patterns of amnesia and anesthesia affect our capacity to cope with personal and collective sorrows, Weller reveals the new vitality we may encounter when we welcome, rather than fear, the pain of loss. Through moving personal stories, poetry, and insightful reflections he leads us into the central energy of sorrow, and to the profound healing and heightened communion with each other and our planet that reside alongside it.

The Afterlife of Billy Fingers, Annie Kagan (2014)

Annie Kagan is not a medium or a psychic, she did not die and come back to life; in fact, when she was awakened by her deceased brother, she thought perhaps she had gone a little crazy

In *The Afterlife of Billy Fingers: How My Bad-Boy Brother Proved to Me There's Life After Death*, Kagan shares the extraordinary story of her after death communications (ADC) with her brother Billy, who began speaking to her just weeks after his unexpected death.

One of the most detailed and profound ADC's ever recorded, Kagan's book takes the reader beyond the near-death experience. Billy's vivid, real-time account of his on-going journey through the mysteries of death will change the way you think about life. Death and your place in the Universe.

Do Funerals Matter? William G Hoy (2013)

Do Funerals Matter? is a creative interweaving of historical, sociocultural, and research-based perspectives on death rituals, drawing from myriad sources to create a picture of what death rituals have been; and where, especially in the Western world, they are going. Death educators, researchers, counselors, clergy, funeral-service professionals, and others will appreciate the book's theory- and research-based approach to the ways in which different cultural groups memorialize their dead. They will also find clear clinical and practical applications in the author's exploration of the five ritual anchors of death-related ceremonial practice and help for professionals counseling the bereaved surrounding funerals. Based on nearly three decades of research and teaching on funeral rites, this volume promises to fill an important gap in the

cross-cultural literature on bereavement, while answering an important question for our generation: Do funerals matter?

Grief is a journey, Kenneth J Doka

In this volume of rare sensitivity, penetrating understanding, and profound insights (Rabbi Earl A. Grollman, author of *Living When a Loved One Has Died*), Dr. Kenneth Doka explores a new, compassionate way to grieve, explaining that grief is not an illness to get over but an individual and ongoing journey.

There is no one-size-fits-all way to cope with loss. The vital bonds that we form with those we love in life continue long after death in very different ways. *Grief Is a Journey* is the first book to overturn prevailing, often judgmental, ideas about grief and replace them with a hopeful, inclusive, personalized, and research-backed approach. New science and studies behind Dr. Doka's teaching upend the dominant but incorrect view that grief proceeds by stages.

Thirst, Mary Oliver

Thirst, a collection of forty three new poems from Pulitzer Prizewinner Mary Oliver, introduces two new directions in the poet's work. Grappling with grief at the death of her beloved partner of over forty years, she strives to experience sorrow as a path to spiritual progress, grief as part of loving and not its end. And within these pages she chronicles for the first time her discovery of faith, without abandoning the love of the physical world that has been a hallmark of her work for four decades.

How to go on living when someone you love dies, Therese Rando (1991)

An inspiring guide to help you through the mourning process.

Mourning the death of a loved one is a process all of us will go through at one time or another. But wherever the death is sudden or anticipated, few of us are prepared for it or for the grief it brings. There is no right or wrong way to grieve; each person's response to loss will be different. Now, in this compassionate, comprehensive guide, Therese A. Rando, Ph.D., bereavement specialist and author of *Loss And Anticipatory Grief*, leads you gently through the painful but necessary process of grieving and helps you find the best way for yourself.

A Religion of One's Own - A guide to creating a personal spirituality in a secular world, Thomas Moore (2014)

Something essential is missing from modern life. Many who've turned away from religious institutions and others who have lived wholly without religion-hunger for more than what contemporary secular life has to offer but are reluctant to follow organized religion's often inflexible path to spirituality. In *A Religion of One's Own*, bestselling author and former monk Thomas Moore explores the myriad possibilities of creating a personal spiritual style, either inside or outside formal religion.

Die Wise - A Manifesto for Sanity and Soul, Stephen Jenkinson (2015)

Die Wise does not offer seven steps for coping with death. It does not suggest ways to make dying easier. It pours no honey to make the medicine go down. Instead, with lyrical prose, deep wisdom, and stories from his two decades of working with dying people and their families, Stephen Jenkinson places death at the center of the page and asks us to behold it in all its painful beauty. *Die Wise* teaches the skills of dying, skills that have to be learned in the course of living deeply and well. *Die Wise* is for those who will fail to live forever.

Dear Life : A Doctors Story of Love and Loss, Rachel Clarke

As a specialist in palliative medicine, Dr Rachel Clarke chooses to inhabit a place many people would find too tragic to contemplate. Every day she tries to bring care and comfort to those reaching the end of their lives and to help make dying more bearable.

Rachel's training was put to the test in 2017 when her beloved GP father was diagnosed with terminal cancer. She learned that nothing - even the best palliative care - can sugar-coat the pain of losing someone you love.

And yet, she argues, in a hospice there is more of what matters in life - more love, more strength, more kindness, more joy, more tenderness, more grace, more compassion - than you could ever imagine. For if there is a difference between people who know they are dying and the rest of us, it is simply this: that the terminally ill know their time is running out, while we live as though we have all the time in the world.

Dear Life is a book about the vital importance of human connection, by the doctor we would all want by our sides at a time of crisis. It is a love letter - to a father, to a profession, to life itself.

Finding the Words: How to Talk with Children and Teens about Death, Suicide, Homicide, Funerals, Cremation, and other End of life matters, Alan Wolfelt.

With this compassionate book by respected grief counselor and educator Dr. Alan Wolfelt, readers will find simplified and suitable methods for talking to children and teenagers about sensitive topics with an emphasis on the subject of death. Honest but child-appropriate language is advocated, and various wording and levels of explanation are suggested for different ages when discussing topics such as death in general, suicide, homicide, accidental death, the death of a child, terminal illness, pet death, funerals, and cremation. An ideal book for parents, caregivers, and counselors looking for an easy resource when talking to youths about death, this book can be used for any setting, religious or otherwise.

'The Young Widow's Book of Home Improvement' by Virginia Lloyd

Virginia Lloyd was single at 32, married at 32, and widowed at 34.

A young professional woman finally meets the man she wants to spend the rest of her life with, only to discover that he is terminally ill. After her beloved John's death from cancer, Virginia was faced with addressing the chronic rising damp problem in the house they had shared and, over her first year as a young widow, her house had to dry from the inside out – and so did Virginia. The Young Widow's Book of Home Improvement is a wry and touching love story that plays with the parallels between our homes and ourselves.

'How to Heal a Grieving Heart' by Doreen Virtue and James van Praagh

When you're grieving, you need support and comfort, and How to Heal a Grieving Heart provides practical and spiritual help. Each page of this small, full-color gift-style book (a companion to the Talking to Heaven Mediumship Cards) contains a comforting message to help grieving people come to terms with their loss. The content is simple and direct, because the authors know and respect that grieving people often have difficulty concentrating and following through on what they read. The reader can open up to a random page, designed with beautiful colors and typeset in attractive fonts, and meditate upon the entry

'The Year of Magical Thinking' by Joan Didion

From one of America's iconic writers, a stunning book of electric honesty and passion. Joan Didion explores an intensely personal yet universal experience: a portrait of a marriage--and a life, in good times and bad--that will speak to anyone who has ever loved a husband or wife or child.

'Option B' by Sheryl Sandberg and Adam Grant

Is everything not going as smooth as you thought? If you're feeling sad, lost and depressed, out of the ashes you will rise. Option B is a book of resilience. Resilience that enables people who went through periods of dark times like sexual assaults, death of loved ones and the violence of war to rediscover joy. We may not always get our Option A, and this book will teach us how we can make the best of our Option B.

'Tibetan Book Of Living And Dying' by Sogyal Rinpoche

Written by the Buddhist meditation master and popular international speaker Sogyal Rinpoche, this highly acclaimed book clarifies the majestic vision of life and death that underlies the Tibetan Buddhist tradition. It includes not only a lucid, inspiring and complete introduction to the practice of meditation but also advice on how to care for the dying with love and compassion, and how to bring them help of a spiritual kind. But there is much more besides in this classic work, which was written to inspire all who read it to begin the journey to enlightenment and so become 'servants of peace.

'Lifetimes' by Bryan Mellonie, Robert Ingpen

When the death of a relative, a friend, or a pet happens or is about to happen . . . how can we help a child to understand?

Lifetimes is a moving book for children of all ages, even parents too. It lets us explain life and death in a sensitive, caring, beautiful way. *Lifetimes* tells us about beginnings. And about endings. And about living in between. With large, wonderful illustrations, it tells about plants. About animals. About people. It tells that dying is as much a part of living as being born. It helps us to remember. It helps us to understand.

'Life and I' by Elisabeth Helland Larsen and Marine Schneider, Die Gestalten Verlag

This sensitively-told story for readers of all ages illustrates the inseparability of life and death.

Rosy-cheeked and wrapped in blue, with a flower in her hair, Death rides a pink bike. Death, a greeneyed little girl in this pastel world, visits small animals with soft fur and big animals with sharp teeth. She lingers with a kindly grandmother as they knit one last scarf together. She wanders through surroundings of gentle beauty and she tells us who she is.

For parents of children facing the loss of a family member, a friend, or a pet, this book finds words to express what is often so difficult to explain. It ends with such a feeling of uplift and acceptance that readers of any age will turn the last page with a smile and a tear.

'Michael Rosen's Sad Book' by Michael Rosen and Quentin Blake

"Grief, when it comes, is nothing like we expect it to be," Joan Didion wrote after losing the love of her life. "The people we most love do become a physical part of us," Meghan O'Rourke observed in her magnificent memoir of loss, "ingrained in our synapses, in the pathways where memories are created." Those wildly unexpected dimensions of grief and the synaptic traces of love are what celebrated British children's book writer and poet Michael Rosen confronted when his eighteen-year-old son Eddie died suddenly of meningitis. Never-ending though the process of mourning may be, Rosen set out to exorcise its hardest edges and subtlest shapes five years later in *Michael Rosen's Sad Book (public library)* — an immensely moving addition to the finest children's books about loss, illustrated by none other than the great Quentin Blake.

'Cry, Heart, But Never Break' by Glenn Ringtved and Charlotte Pardi (Illustrator)

Aware their grandmother is gravely ill, four siblings make a pact to keep death from taking her away. But Death does arrive all the same, as it must. He comes gently, naturally. And he comes with enough time to share a story with the children that helps them to realize the value of loss to life and the importance of being able to say goodbye

Being Mortal by Atul Gawande

This is a book about the modern experience of mortality – what it's like to get old and die, how medicine has changed this and how it has not, where our ideas about death have gone wrong. With his trademark mix of perceptiveness and sensitivity, Gawande outlines a story that crosses the globe, as he examines his experiences as a surgeon and those of his patients and family, and learns to accept the limits of what he can do.

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A Beginner's Guide to the End Practical Advice for Living Life and Facing Death, BJ Miller (author), Shoshana Berger (author)

The end of a life can often feel like a traumatic, chaotic and inhuman experience. In this reassuring and inspiring book, palliative care physician Dr BJ Miller and writer Shoshana Berger provide a vision for rethinking and navigating this universal process.

There are plenty of self-help books for mourners, but nothing in the way of a modern, approachable and above all useful field guide for the living. And all of us - young, old, sick and well - could use the help. After all, pregnant couples have ample resources available to them as they prepare to bring a new life into the world: Lamaze courses, elaborate birth plans, tons of manuals. Why don't we have a *What to Expect When You're Expecting to Die* book?

An accessible, beautifully designed and illustrated companion, *A Beginner's Guide to the End* offers a clear-eyed and compassionate survey of the most pressing issues that come up when one is dying, and will bring optimism and practical guidance to empower readers with the knowledge, resources and tools they'll need to die better, maybe even with triumph.

The Soul Midwives' Handbook: The Holistic And Spiritual Care Of The Dying Paperback – 2 Sept. 2013

Soul Midwives, a movement begun by Felicity Warner, has changed the face of modern holistic and spiritual palliative care in the UK and abroad.

Soul Midwives are holistic and spiritual companions to the dying. They draw on traditional skills, now largely forgotten, applying them to our modern world to ease the passage of those who are dying. Their services are used within people's own homes, in hospices and in care homes.

Anyone with an open and compassionate heart and a desire to help others can train to become a Soul Midwife. This book will guide you through the core principles and techniques of this practice.

The Natural Death Handbook, 4th Edition, Stephanie Wienrich, Josefine Speyer

More and more people today want to organise at least part of a funeral for themselves, without depending on funeral directors. The Natural Death Handbook shows you how to do everything from ordering a coffin to hiring a horse-drawn hearse to finding a woodland burial ground (where a tree is planted for each grave instead of having a headstone). It also explains how to arrange a burial on private land and how to set up a woodland burial ground as a business or charity. For those who prefer a funeral to be organised for them, the book's Good Funeral Guide details 'best buys' throughout the UK, and how to bring the price down to less than a third of the usual average price. 'Gives excellent advice' *Cosmopolitan* 'If you want to die with dignity and a modicum of grace, invest in a copy of the reassuring and practical Natural Death Handbook' *Spectator* 'From the spiritual and mystical to the practical and administrative, vital information is included on how to organise a funeral, how to care for someone dying at home and how to come to terms with bereavement.' *Top Sante Magazine*

Grief Works: Stories of Life, Death and Surviving

Death is the last taboo in our society, and grief is still profoundly misunderstood. So many of us feel awkward and uncertain around death, and shy away from talking honestly with family and friends. *Grief Works* is a compassionate guide that will inform and engage anyone who is grieving, from the 'expected' death of a parent to the sudden unexpected death of a small child, and provide clear advice for those seeking to comfort the bereaved.

With deeply moving case studies of real people's stories of loss, and brilliantly accessible and practical advice, *Grief Works* will be passed down through generations as the definitive guide for anyone who has lost a loved one, and revolutionise the way we talk about life, loss and death.

A Good Death, Margaret Rice

When her own mother died, Margaret Rice realised how completely unprepared she and her family had been for the experience of companioning a loved one who is dying. So she decided to go in search of the information she couldn't find when she most needed it and write the book herself - a novice's guide to death. We live in a period of intense death denial. But what if we were to smash that taboo and ask questions we want answered, like how do we know when someone is close to dying, and how do we best care for them? What actually happens to our body when we die? How do we work with medical experts? How do we deal with the non-medical issues that will come up, such as wills, finances and even social media passwords? Is morphine used to nudge death along or is this just a myth? Where do questions about euthanasia fit in with personal, lived experience? Margaret Rice lifts the lid on the taboos that surround death, sharing practical information and compassionate advice from multiple

sources to break down boundaries and offer better choices of care to suit individual needs. This is a book to help the dying and their carers feel less isolated, and help us all face death better.

The State of Disbelief, Juliet Rosenfeld

'A beautifully written, profoundly moving and immersive account of grief that will bring solace.' - Louise France, The Times
A revelatory book about death and mourning by a psychotherapist faced with sudden bereavement. When Juliet Rosenfeld's husband dies of lung cancer only seven months into their marriage, everything she has learnt about death as a psychotherapist is turned on its head. As she attempts to navigate her way through her own devastating experience of loss, Rosenfeld turns to her battered copy of Freud's seminal essay 'Mourning and Melancholia'. Inspired by the distinction Freud draws between the savage trauma of loss that occurs at the moment of death - grief - and the longer, unpredictable evolution of that loss into something that we call mourning, Rosenfeld finds herself dramatically rethinking the commonly held therapeutic idea of 'working through stages of grief'. This is a beautifully written meditation on what the investment of love means and how to find your own path after bereavement in order for life to continue.