

Levy

METAPHOR WORK

In your journal.

Loss and change are a part of life. We lose many things: we lose our way in the dark; we lose our car keys; we lose our temper; we lose friends and loved ones. The Universe giveth and the Universe taketh away. Our losses need to be acknowledged, grieved, healed, cried for, laughed at... So, take time to remember and acknowledge your losses – the people and the things that have gone from your life – through leaving or dying or moving on – through time and change. List them in your journal as they come to your mind and heart – some will be obvious, some will wait quietly for your attention...e.g.:

I remember losing...

My grandmother Annie

My grandmother Lydia

My father – and finding him again

My sweet mother Leah

Lorna, the first of my classmates to die

My old black lab Fala from my boyhood hunting days

The cotton wood tree by our driveway

Joe, my best friend's alcoholic father

My false sense of manhood in college athletic

Write freely about these changes in your journal – what did they teach you, give you? How did they touch your life? What do you remember about them? What stories can you tell? Write. Write. And then, for form:

Over a thousand years ago and half a world away, Li Bo grieved. And more recently, Peter Williams used Li Bo's format to lament his own loss:

When she was here, Li Bo, She was like cold summer lager,

Like hot pastrami at Katz's on Houston Street,

Like a bright nickname on my downtown express,

Like every custardy honey from the old art books:

She was quadraphonic Mahler

And the perfect little gymnast.

Now she's gone, it's like flat Coke on Sunday morning,

Like a melted Velveeta on white, eaten

Listening to Bobby Vinton—

Like the Philadelphia Eagles.

Peter Williams

First, write in your journal about changes in your life – about things and people you have lost, about choices you have made. Then, pick one loss, one change, to focus on. Use this general format for your own purposes, your own remembering, your own reflecting upon a change in your life, and see what happens for you:

Before this, it was like this...

Like...

Like...

It was...

And

And now it has changed because....

Now it's like this...

Like this...

Like this...

Start by following this format, but don't be restricted by it – let your work become what it needs to become. Explore a change in your life of some sort – a loss, a gain, a move, a learning, whatever... Explain, somewhat, the situation, and then show (with metaphor) how it is different: Use the power of metaphor to capture the difference in feeling. Before, it was like this... and this ... And now it is like this... and this... and this...

Ex—iting

When we were together, it was mutual admiration,
Like UN diplomats watching Madeline Albright sing Eva Peron,
Like a toddler bouncing his sticky hand on the head of a foster dog,
Like a monkey watching a tour guide through Plexiglas.

We were an NPR gameshow with Carl Castle on our answering machine
And an acoustic guitar on a lazy summer night.

Now that it's over, it is effortless distance,
Like the boat you can't see on the horizon,
Like the AOL cd with 15,000 free minutes you toss in the can,
Like a jingle that refuses to get stuck in your head,
Like the No. 2 pencil I lost in seventh grade,
Like civil war in a country you've never heard of.

We are strangers watching a Vegas crooner with dyed black hair,
Barely visible through cigar smoke rising like curds from whey.

Definition

With my soccer thighs, I was tortoise and hare all at once,
Like Supergirl if they'd made a good movie and cast a sassy brunette,
Like Superglue when Elmer's just won't do,
Like Supermarkets in France with 10 varieties of Brie,
Like Supersizing your carrot order instead of your fries.

I was Barbie's Brazilian cousin,
And I never wore heels.

Now, with my everyday thighs, I am one among the crowd,
Like a nice sip of tea on a brisk fall day,
Like tuna on rye with lettuce, no onions,
Like "yes, ma'am" and "no, sir,"
Like Snoopy's Zamboni.

I am my mother's daughter,
And I never wear cleats.

Heather Pappas
Metaphor Work

When our poodle, Tasha, was alive, she was like a buzzing fly circling your face while you're sleeping.

Like a burning hemorrhoid you scratch but only inflame.
Like a lightbulb you can't turn off.
Like a wart with a hair in the line of vision living on your nose.
She was a cottonball, stuck deep in my ear.
But she was MY cottonball.

Now she is in my flowerbed, its like the lightbulb has finally burned out.
Like an arm is missing from my body.
Like the sun was erased from the sky.
I loved her, I never knew it.
Like the rain.

Michael Huard

A Tryst of Fate

Before I met you, my life ~~was~~ had a new world order, sets and subsets of Blooms taxonomy,
All that I had, was behind lock and tight hasp, my bars of gold in the vaults of Ft. Knox,
My life was great, I was Jacks in the green, merry and light, heard and not seen.
Then into my life you crashed, a heat-seeking, life-tweaking, runaway tornado in fishnets and heels.
I stood spellbound and speechless as you floated into the bar. I was struck by your dress, you
looked like a cheap bawdy whore, and at that time in my life just what the love doctor ordered.
You turned me into a locomotive train wreck with Adams' Family Values, I was falling quickly for
your sultry skullduggery.
After some John Barleycorn, I was feeling kinda brave, I asked if you would like to go back to my
place, we both knew how to do that delicate dance, without seeming forward but taking a chance.
Its damn hard to run when you have your nails in my tires, raking my coals back in front of the fire.
You promised me things in short order fashion, doing a great imitation of a politician or leader of
some labor faction,
I should have known then, like Eve handed Adam, it was all rotten, just the fruit of your passion.
The next morning it came thundering in, Clydesdales unhitched and the heart door left broken.
The man in my coffee, he shrugged and he cried, like a kid with a scraped knee he knew you had
lied.
Lancelot, and I we've some thing in common, both lusted in vain, my dear Guenevere,
and not unlike him, tis your husband I dread.
How was I to know you were taken, as most men don't, I should have asked for directions.
But now that you're gone, I feel tossed out to sea, fortunate to have survived the tempest, a
modern day Nowhere Man..
You have probably gone on striking town after town, leaving men in your wake, and hearts
scattered around.

"Upon Losing Money in Harrell's Drugstore"

Daddy trusted me like a ripcord on a parachute
I was the bank teller in Fort Knox –
Like a toothless man in a dentist chair
Holding the gold tooth for insert
I held the 50 dollar bill.
I was the million dollar kid
Gone broke
When like the insanity of a madman
I lost
The loot
And cried
As hard as the February sky that held me.
He lost faith in me
For holding onto anything green –
And to this day
Money flies from me
Like a discount airliner headed for Cancun...
I am the tequila hangover from hell –
A bottomless pit.

(Renee)

Jennifer Martinez

Dirty Dishes

So much depends
upon

a dirty dish
on the table

forgotten
and crusting.

Shadow

So much depends
upon

the shadow
of a tree

cast
at angles

over
the porch table.

Sweat

So much depends
upon

the smell
of sweat

and new houses.

Mud

So much depends
upon

thick mud
collecting
below the path

in the way of
the door.

Jennifer Martinez

Before Molly came, the house was empty
Like a swimming pool in December,
Like an abandoned car in a vacant lot,
It was a museum of decaying still life paintings
And a poem written for no one.

Now that she's here, it's like quiet music playing,
Like soft rain in spring,
Dancing in the park,
Like a letter to an old friend.

1870

1871

1872

1873

1874

1875

1876

1877

1878

1879

1880

1881

1882

1883

1884

1885

1886

1887

1870

1871

1872

1873

1874

1875

1876

1877

1878

1879

1880

1881

1882

1883

1884

1885

1870

1871

1872

1873