

For the Sake of One We Love and Are Losing: A Meditative Poem by Awakin Call Editors

Phyllis Cole-Dai's poem entered my heart as a balm a gift that seemed specially crafted for my losses. But I know all who read these words that arrived from the dream world will be moved deeply. This stunning book will serve as a life raft to carry you to the other side of your journey of grief. --Marianne Murphy Zarzana, poet

"For the Sake of One We Love and Are Losing" is a remarkable poem. Its origins lay in a powerful dream that writer Phyllis Cole-Dai had just before the pandemic hit the United States. Don't miss the PDF of the poem available for download and sharing at the end of this piece. What follows here is the poem's backstory in Phyllis's own words (excerpted from here):

"I was in California on a personal writing retreat. I go every winter for about ten days to some place that's a little warmer than South Dakota just to give myself a boost. On this retreat I was working intensively on a novel in progress. About a week in, at about three in the morning, I was wakened by a very powerful dream.

In the dream a relative who was dying invited the family in for a celebration of her life. There were multitudes of people there, and at the very end she invited all of us to gather around her bed. I don't know how we managed that, but in the dream world you can. And she asked us to read a poem to her together. And this poem was in the form of a book. I can still see the turquoise color of that book, and I can sense its age and feel the texture of its paper. It was a very, very special book. And it was a surprise that we were to read this, because the folks on that side of the family don't tend to have any great affection for poetry. But we did this, and as we read this poem to her together, an amazing wave of love and consolation swept through us. And it was that feeling I think that, woke me up. When I woke up there was almost like a voice, telling me that I needed to write the words of this poem down.

And the lines of the poem were still fairly clear in my mind at that point, and certainly that title, was very clear, "For the Sake of One We Love and Are Losing." But I wanted to go back to sleep, and it was kind of cold and dark in that room. I just argued with myself, but this voice or this impulse would not let go, so I eventually reached for a journal and started scribbling down what I could remember-- the lines were already starting to escape me so I just wrote as fast as I could, in any order that the lines came to me. And then when I had remembered all that I could, it was like somebody threw a switch and I went back to sleep.

The next morning I got up and I looked at what I had written. I expected it to be nonsense but it wasn't - it seemed to have a lot of power to it. But I needed to be working on my novel I told myself, so I tabled that poem until I got home. And then I looked at it

again and I had the sense that this poem needed to be shared. So I crafted it as best I could and sent it off to a few poet friends and asked, "Am I fooling myself here, or does this really need to be shared?" And without exception, they said I needed to share it. They offered some tweaks, for which I am very grateful. But basically the poem is in the form that I could remember from the dream.

I wanted to try and honor the feeling in the dream, and the book that I had seen in the dream. So I turned this meditative poem into a short book which is also something that could be used as a journal. It has enough blank pages and white space around the lines of the poem that you can journal in it. You can attach photographs of somebody you have lost or are losing, it could be something you use to work through your own grief process or to give as a memorial gift to someone who is working through their own grieving. The book also has a turquoise color, it has a handwritten kind of script. It's the closest I could come, within my budget, to honoring the book that I saw within the dream."

Phyllis's original thought was to release the book on Memorial Day last year, but the pandemic accelerated her plans. She made the book available solely through her website, so that she could sign every copy that was ordered, and give people the opportunity to request a personalized inscription if they so wished.

When she lost her own father recently to COVID-19, Phyllis would receive, among the many messages and gestures of condolence, solidarity and care, a copy of her own poem -- coming to her once again, she notes, "from the outside-- as it did in my dream."

Now Phyllis has made available, here on DailyGood, a beautifully formatted PDF of "For the Sake of One We Love and Our Losing" that can be downloaded, printed and/or forwarded freely.

In her words, "You may choose to share it during a memorial service or other farewell gathering. Save it as a keepsake, attaching photographs, jotting down memories and reflections. Offer it as a gift of compassion. However you choose to use it, may it bring you consolation."

To download simply click on the arrow that appears on the bottom right of the file. You can also listen to Phyllis reading the poem here.

On Ash Wednesday of 1999, Phyllis Cole-Dai walked out of her home in Columbus, Ohio with a friend. The two of them carried no money with them and would spend the next 47 days -- of Lent and Holy Week -- living on the streets. "We didn't go out to find answers to questions or to search out solutions to problems. We didn't go out to save anyone or to hand out donations of food and blankets. We went out for one primary reason: to be as present as possible to everyone we met - homeless person, volunteer, University president, cop." *The Emptiness of Our Hands* is a moving memoir of those 47 days, co-authored by Phyllis. It explores the great divide between the housed and the homeless-- and how being without a real home can ravage the human spirit.

As a writer and editor Phyllis has always written across the divides that separate us from

ourselves and one another. Through her writing she seeks deeper understanding, and the possibility of healing -- for herself and readers. Her work spans multiple genres...

For more inspiration, join this Saturday's Awakin Call with Phyllis Cole-Dai: "Writing Across the Divide." Additional details and RSVP info [here](#).