

A Gentle Companion for the Hardest Days

*Five soft places to rest your heart, and a few honest words
for the days grief feels heaviest.*

- Rita C. New -

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Author of *Poetic Tears* & the *Poetic Tears Workbook Journal*

A Word From Rita

Dear friend,

If you are holding this, you already know something about the particular weight of losing the person your whole life was built around. I was married for fifty-two years. My days, my identity, my very sense of who I was - wife, mother, grandmother, caregiver - were woven around that one steady thread. When he was gone, I did not just lose my husband. For a long while, I lost the sense of knowing who I was without him.

No one hands you a map for that. So I have spent my own grief making one - first for myself, then for the widows and widowers who write to me and say, "I feel exactly the same way, and I thought I was the only one."

You are not the only one.

This little companion is not a cure for grief, because grief is not an illness to be cured. It is love with nowhere left to go. What I offer here instead are five small, honest places to set that love down for a few minutes - to breathe, to remember, and to begin, gently, asking the question so many widows and widowers carry silently: *who am I, now?*

Take these prompts one at a time, on whatever day you have room for them. There is no order, no deadline, and no wrong way to grieve. Keep a cup of tea nearby, and be as tender with yourself as you would be with a dear friend in your same shoes.

With you in this,

Rita C. New

Author, *Poetic Tears*

How to Use This Companion

There are five gentle reflections ahead - not tasks, not a checklist, just an invitation. Some days you may only be able to read the words at the top of the page, and that is enough. Other days you may want to sit for a while with a journal and let the writing prompt lead you somewhere unexpected.

There is no right pace. Grief does not move in a straight line, and neither should this.

A few gentle reminders before you begin:

- There is no timeline for grief, no matter what anyone else tells you.
- You are allowed to feel joy and sorrow in the very same breath.
- Rebuilding an identity takes far longer than the world expects it to.
- Asking “who am I now?” is not disloyal - it is how love finds a new shape.

Five Gentle Reflections

1. The Weight You're Carrying Today

Grief is not the same on Tuesday as it was on Monday. Before anything else, just name what today feels like - heavy, numb, quietly okay, unexpectedly sharp. There is no wrong answer.

Right now, in this moment, my grief feels like...

2. A Memory That Still Makes You Smile

Somewhere inside the sorrow, there is usually a memory that still brings warmth - a small, ordinary moment that mattered more than you realized at the time.

A memory I return to, that still makes me smile, is...

3. What You Gave, and What It Cost

So many of us, especially caregivers, quietly set aside our own wants to keep the people we loved comfortable. That was not weakness. It was devotion. But it is worth naming, gently, what you set down.

One thing I gave up, out of love, was... and today I feel about that...

4. Who Am I, Now?

This is the question underneath so many others. You do not have to answer it fully today. Just let it sit on the page for a moment, honestly, without rushing toward resolution.

One small part of myself I am rediscovering, or hoping to rediscover, is...

5. One Gentle Thing for Tomorrow

Not a five-year plan. Not even a to-do list. Just one small, kind thing you might offer yourself tomorrow.

One gentle thing I will offer myself tomorrow is...

A Small Poem, For You

*You do not have to be finished grieving
to begin, quietly, becoming.*

*The love does not leave when the grief softens -
it simply learns a new way to stand beside you.*

*Some days you will only survive.
Some days you will surprise yourself with laughter.
Both are the truth. Both are allowed.*

*You are not who you were before.
You are not required to be.*

*You are only asked to keep going,
gently, in your own time,
toward whoever you are becoming next.*

- Rita C. New

You Don't Have to Walk This Alone

This companion is just a small taste of what I hope to build with you: **The Poetic Tears Community** - a gentle, moderated home for widows and widowers who understand, without explanation, exactly what you are carrying.

A place for honest forums, shared resources, a memorial space to honor the ones we've lost, and real guidance for the long, uneven road of rebuilding a life and an identity after loss.

You're already on the list - you'll be among the very first to know
the moment The Poetic Tears Community opens its doors.

In the meantime, if these words felt like they were written for you, *Poetic Tears* and the companion *Poetic Tears Workbook Journal* are available on Amazon.

With so much tenderness,

Rita C. New

poetictears.com