A MOURNER’S KADDISH

Translation by Lab/Shul

Yitgadal v’yitkdash sh’meih raba.
B’al’ma div’ra chitureih
v’yamlich malchuteih
b’chayeichon uv’yomeichon
Uv’chayei d’chol beit yisra-
ba-agala uvizman kariv
v’imru amen

May our lives reflect the greatness of the Divine Name throughout the world,
sparks within the Process of Creation.
May the world be ruled by our highest aspirations,
soon, in our lifetimes.
And let us say, Amen.

Y’hei sh’meih raba m’varach
l’alam ul’al’mei al’maya.
Yitbarach v’yishtabach
v’yitpa-ar v’yitromam v’yitnasei
v’yithadar v’yitaleh v’yithalal
sh’meih d’kudsha
b’rich hu
L’eila min kol birchata v’shirata,
tushb’chata v’nechemata,
da-amiran b’al’ma
v’imru amen

May the Divine Name be known as a Fountain of Blessings:
praised, honored, beautified, elevated, and exalted
beyond any song or description that has ever been uttered.
And let us say, Amen.

Yehei shelama raba min shemaya,
vehayim aleinu ve’al kol Yisra-eil
ve’al kol yoshvey tevel
v’imru amen

May an all-embracing peace shower down from the heavens,
refreshing the lives of all the people on earth.
May the Source of Peace inspire us to make peace
for ourselves, for our community,
and for all the people on earth.
And let us say, Amen.
What follows is my version of the Mourner’s Kaddish. I made no attempt to translate the traditional prayer. What I have tried to do is to write what the act of saying Kaddish means to me. That is, what it feels like individually, what it means as an act of remembering and mourning, how it serves as a communal acknowledgement of death, and how it anchors the reader in life. I have attempted to follow the rhythm of the prayer which I believe to be as essential as the words. Long before I learned the words, or their meaning, the rhythm and intonation of the prayer were powerfully etched into my mind. To this end, I’ve included a transliteration of the prayer for comparison’s sake. I also took a little poetic license at the very end.

And so it is

And so it goes

we hear and see

and feel and taste

and we come

and we go

and we leave

behind and gone

the life of here

wishing hope

for all Israel

and all the world

that we cannot know

and we say, Amen

And as we stand

together

we derive

peace from pain

to remember

every life

We here affirm

And so it is

Yitgadal

and so it goes

v’yitkadash

we hear and see

sh’mei raba

and feel and taste

b’alma divra

and we come

chirutei

and we go

v’yamlich

and we leave

malchutei

behind and gone

b’chai yei chon

the life of here

uv’yo mei chon

wishing hope

uv’chai yei

for all Israel

k’kol beit Yisrael

and all the world

b’agala

that we cannot know

uvizman kariv

and we say, Amen

v’imru Amein

And as we stand

Y’hei shmei

together

raba

we derive

m’varach

peace from pain

l’olam

to remember

ul’almei

every life

al’maiya

We here affirm

Yitbarach

the grace of love

v’yistabach

the hope of living

v’yitpaar

the gulf of loss

v’yitromam

the fear of losing

v’yitnasei

the missing ones

v’yithadar

remembered all

v’yitaleh

holding us

v’yitalal
And each name we say sh’mei d’kud’sha
we say b’rich hu
tears a hole l’eila min
and mends the same kol birchata
and tears and tears v’shirata
it mends and closes tush birchata
and mends the same v’neh-chemata
d’amiran v’alma
and tears and tears v’imru
it mends and closes Amein
and opens us
d’amiran v’alma
as we are
v’imru
and as we
Amein
are not

So we are here
Y’hei shlama
and know
raba
that this moment
min sh’maya
of all moments
v’chayim
together shared
aleinu
is our time of hope
v’al kol yisrael
our time of peace
v’imru Amein

Hoping as we hold
Oseh shalom
on to this passing
bimromav
that some one of us
hu yaaseh
will hold on to us
shalom aleinu
when our name is said
v’al kol Yisrael
and all this peace
v’al kol shalom
will also be for you
v’al kol Yisrael
and for me
v’al kol
and we say
v’imru
Amen
Amein

To Live in this World
By Mary Oliver

To live in this world
you must be able to do three things:

to love what is mortal;
to hold it
against your bones knowing
your own life depends on it;
and, when the time comes to let it go,
to let it go.
Kaddish Poem
by Marge Piercy

Look around us, search above us, below, behind.
We stand in a great web of being joined together.
Let us praise, let us love the life we are lent
passing through us in the body of Israel
and our own bodies, let’s say amein.

Time flows through us like water.
The past and the dead speak through us.
We breathe our children’s children, blessing.

Blessed is the earth from which we grow,
blessed the life we are lent,
blessed the ones who teach us,
blessed the ones we teach,
blessed is the word that cannot say the glory
that shines through us and remains to shine
flowing past distant suns on the way to forever.
Let’s say amein.

Blessed is the light, blessed is the darkness
but blessed above all else is peace
which bears the fruits of knowledge
on strong branches, let’s say amen.

Peace that bears joy into the world,
peace that enables love, peace over Israel
everywhere, blessed and holy is peace, let’s say amein.

Your body is away from me
But there is a window open
from my heart to yours.
From this window, like the moon
I keep sending news secretly.

Rumi

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