

*Beginning again, but this time I'm alone. Now I'm on
new journey and I'm accompanied with something
called "grief". The footsteps next to "us" are now silent.*

It is a journey where my dreams seem to have vanished, images of our personal world that we created together seem lost in a sea of grief. Dreams that attached our lives together, our plans of going forward, creating our new memories, and those dreams, our dreams and 'our' plans together are shattered on the floor.

Grief has taken its place crowding its way into my thoughts. Those thoughts of my 'If only' - 'I wish' - 'just one more time' - please God. This was too soon, I want just one more dinner, one more trip, one more walk where I hear your footsteps next to me, and one more night lying close to you. My grief tells me the dreams we shared are shattered and piecing my life back together has become my new journey, where two now became one.

Grief hangs around like a homeless dog, an unanticipated guest, or that guest you know is coming but you do not know when it will appear again. When grief or the pain of our loss comes knocking at our door, we want to lock and bolt the door to our heart, saying "grief you are not welcome here". One day on my journey I read a story called "Talking to Grief". As I sat alone reading it one evening after my husband had left my life, for heaven, Denise Levertov's writing resonated with me, and my emotions when my grief comes to visit and I don't want to let it in.

Talking to Grief

Ah, grief, I should not treat you

like a homeless dog

who comes to the back door

for a crust, for a meatless bone.

I should trust you.

I should coax you

into the house and give you your own corner,

a worn mat to lie on,

your own water dish.

You think I don't know you've been living

under my porch,

you long for your real place to be readied

**before winter comes.
You need your name,
your collar and tab. You need
the right to warn off intruders
to consider
My house your own
and me your person
and yourself
my own dog.**

Denise Levertou

..... Welcome in, we will warm each other, our tears will come together... mine in your fur and yours on my feet.... Yes, grief you will be part of my journey, and you're now present in my healing.

Nehemiah knows, he knows the deep cry – the grief – the heavy heart – he knows when your breath is taken away from you while the tears of grief pour out from your heart and you struggle just to breathe in one more breath of air. Grief comes, it's heavy and feels like it will never leave, but as the homeless dog, it needs to come in.

Nehemiah 1: 4-6a

When I heard this, I sat down and wept. In fact, for days I mourned, fasted, and prayed to the God of heavens. Then I said, O Lord, God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps his covenant of unending love with those who love him and obeys his commands, listen to my prayer. Look down and see me praying night and day.

At times I am praying between tears and wailing – uttering only His name, God oh my God, trying to tell Him about my grief and pain, my loss. But He already knows – He understands. Then I remember the cross – His son – His only son. He cares about the widows and He feels my pain. He knows those dreams are shattered and He knows I will get up, I will walk, and I will continue my life, even on days when grief visits me. It's my new journey and I'll carry with me my husband's love deep in my heart and each precious memory of our days together, when I didn't walk alone. You loved me and I loved you, that love will never leave my heart or my journey, you'll be with me always my love, my husband.

Reneé Salzbrenner