

HOSPICE *of the* VALLEY
Bereavement Literature

THE TIDAL WAVE OF GRIEF

. . . Grief is a tidal wave that overtakes you, smashes down upon you with unimaginable force,
sweeps you up into its darkness,
where you tumble and crash against unidentifiable surfaces,
only to be thrown out on an unknown beach, bruised, reshaped.
Grief means not being able to read more than two sentences at a time.
It is walking into rooms with intention that suddenly vanishes.
Grief is three o'clock in the morning sweats that won't stop.
It is dreadful Sundays, Mondays that are no better.
It makes you look for a face in the crowd,
knowing full well the face we want cannot be found in that crowd.
Grief is utter aloneness that razes the rational mind
and makes room for the phantasmagoric.
It makes you suddenly get up and leave in the middle of a meeting,
without saying a word.
Grief makes what others think of you moot.
It shears away the masks of normal life
and forces brutal honesty out of your mouth
before propriety can stop you.
It shoves away friends,
scares away so-called friends,
and rewrites address books for you.
Grief makes you laugh at people who cry over spilled milk,
right to their faces.
It tells the world that you are untouchable
at the very moment when touch
is the only contact that might reach you.
It makes lepers out of upstanding citizens.
Grief discriminates against no one.
It kills. Maims. And cripples.
It is the ashes from which the phoenix rises,
and the mettle of rebirth.
It returns life to the living dead.
It teaches that there is nothing absolutely true or untrue.
It assures the living that we know nothing for certain.
It humbles. It shrouds. It blackens. It enlightens.
Grief will make a new person out of you,
if it doesn't kill you in the making.

— Stephanie Ericsson, in *Companion through the Darkness*