



# THE WELL OF GRIEF

## MONTH 6: Mid-February to Mid-March

*Again, as you engage with the below assignments, please be aware of words and images that bring up specific emotions, memories, reflections and questions. Highlight those passages (or make note of the running time.) Please also pause and take time to go deeper into your responses through journaling. Listen to your inner teacher. When moved, include what comes up for you in your reflection paper.*

### **Required (or highly suggested!) Metaphor Writing Exercise**

**Step One:** Read “Talking to Grief,” a poem by Denise Levertov

*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 tag. You need*

*the right to warn off intruders,  
to consider  
my house your own  
and me your person  
and yourself  
my own dog.*

**Step Two:** Read “Grief,” a poem by Barbara Crooker

*is a river you wade in until you get to the other side.  
But I am here, stuck in the middle, water parting  
around my ankles, moving downstream  
over the flat rocks. I'm not able to lift a foot,  
move on. Instead, I'm going to stay here  
in the shallows with my sorrow, nurture it  
like a cranky baby, rock it in my arms.  
I don't want it to grow up, go to school, get married.  
It's mine. Yes, the October sunlight wraps me  
in its yellow shawl, and the air is sweet  
as a golden Tokay. On the other side,  
there are apples, grapes, walnuts,  
and the rocks are warm from the sun.  
But I'm going to stand here,  
growing colder, until every inch  
of my skin is numb. I can't cross over.  
Then you really will be gone.*

**Step Three:** Write nonstop for eight (8) minutes about your own metaphor for grief. Or simply write whatever comes up for you in response to one or both poems.

### **Required Reading**

- *Bearing the Unbearable*: Chapters 33-38, 46, 47
- “The Condition of Black Life is One of Mourning” by Claudia Rankine, Excerpted from *Rebellious Mourning, The Collective Work of Grief*, edited by Cindy Milstein
- Traumatic Loss PDF: Compilation of various resources
- *Understanding Your Grief*: Chapter titled ‘Seek Reconciliation, Not Resolution’
- *The Other Side of Sadness*: Pages 54-63 and 104-110

## **Required Viewing**

- [Art Therapy lets Veterans Reveal what their PTSD looks like](#)
- [Veterans Unlock the Healing Power of Writing: How Poetry and Music Help Warriors Heal](#)

## **Deep Dive Resources**

- Somatic practices for self stewardship and for working with others in times of grief
- [Healing the Warrior's Heart](#): Looks at PTSD through the prism of Native American ceremony, and explores the ancient healing traditions that continue to help returning American Indian soldiers, as well as non-native veterans suffering from this affliction.
- [Native Words, Native Cultures- Coming Home](#): War is hard on soldiers. They see death and destruction. They see comrades injured or killed—and sometimes they must kill others. Some endure the horrors of being a prisoner of war. Returning to a normal life after these kinds of experiences can be very difficult. American Indian cultures have special traditions that help their warriors return home.