

Abstract

In *The Long Goodbye*, Meghan O'Rourke writes that if "the condition of grief is nearly universal, its transactions are exquisitely personal" (57). She speaks to the acknowledgeable reality that all people face loss and she speaks to how it affects each person individually. Oftentimes, artists take to publicly expressing their grief through their art. How, then, can art about grief capture both the "nearly universal" and the "exquisitely personal"? What threads and commonalities make up the "nearly universal"? Writing throughout the ages has attempted to express this experience through words and pages and readings. In creative nonfiction, authors must translate their own understandings onto the written page. How do they get at "truth"? Several contemporary texts shed light on this idea, more specifically Meghan O'Rourke's memoir as well as *The Light of the World* by Elizabeth Alexander, *Wave* by Sonali Deraniyagala, *Wild* by Cheryl Strayed, and *Blue Nights* by Joan Didion. Each memoir retains a unique writing style, structure, and plethora of literary elements while also contributing to the unifying aspects of the larger literary conversation about grief. These memoirs include resonant metaphors, often in the form of animism, and body imagery to create physical manifestations of grief. These physical manifestations each come about as searches for new identities, ones without the lost, bound by paper and glue and cover art. In that way, these memoirs serve as healing, a new limb so-to-speak, and as a way for the authors to preserve their lost loved ones.

Honors College
Ball State University
Muncie, IN 47306