

Holding Space

Mourning meditations for miscarriage,
stillbirth, and infant loss.



Written by H. Laney
Illustrations by Land & She

It's OK.

Whatever you're feeling, it's ok.

This little guide isn't magic.

It won't fix your loss.

It won't solve your grief.



It's simply a book of small moments you can take for yourself, written and offered by someone who has been where you are. Sometimes, in despair, our feelings can overwhelm us and it seems like we'll never make it through. In the darkness of grief, when you feel lonely in your own body, please know that you are enough. You didn't do anything wrong. Your feelings, pains, and struggles are valid.

Call it meditation, call it prayer, call it breathing, call it daydreaming, call it whatever you want. Someone gave you this guide because they care about you. Sometimes people can't empathize the way we need them to, but you are loved.

Trying to wade through the wreckage of lost parenthood feels like carrying a heavy bucket of water filled to the brim, trying to not let any water splash out. Trying to live our lives after such a specific loss can feel like trying to hold back all the most important feelings and thoughts that echo in our hearts. Time inches along so slowly as we painstakingly move through every minute, every day.

The day life changes in this way can feel like the end of everything: of hopes, of dreams, and of identity. On that day you gained membership into a terrible club, one whose members, like you, did not ask to join. Know that you will make it through. There is no schedule to grief. When it feels as though everyone has moved on and your grief remains, know you are not alone.

Love always,
a friend.





Imagine your thoughts entering
your mind like blooming flowers.

They can all bloom here
without judgment.



Think of everyone who loves you.

Think of the energy of their thoughts entering the palms of your hands and traveling up to your heart.

Feel your hands tingle.



Imagine lighting a candle in the still air.
Let it be a vigil for your loss.

The light flickers but never extinguishes.
You can carry the light forever.



Imagine you are on a tractor, plowing through a dry field. Put the tractor in low gear and slowly plow through the soil and rocks. Know that you are powerful even when you feel weak.



Put your hands on your ribs and feel your breath move in and out. Breathing is no small feat. Be still in your breath.



Place your hand over your belly and let it fill with a big breath. Exhale slowly.

If you feel emptiness, let it sit in peace.

If you feel strength, let it sit in peace.



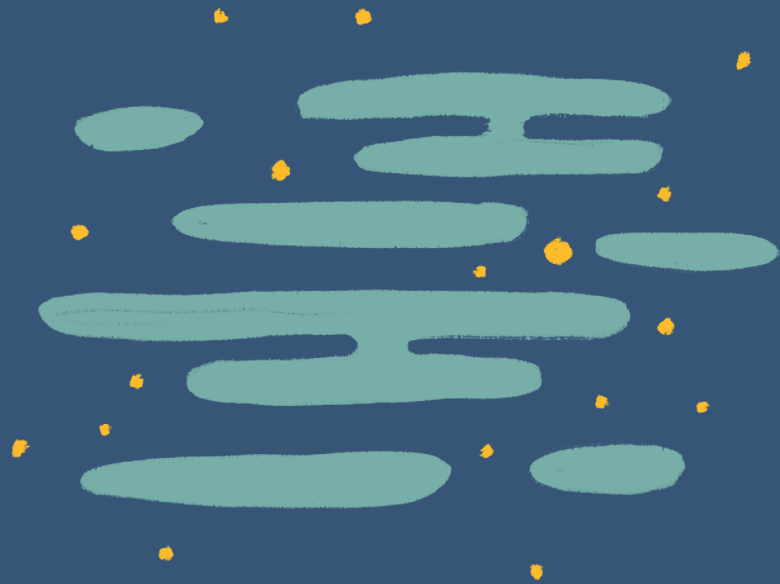
Anger will come.

Jealousy will come.

Clench your fists and hold your breath.

Slowly breathe out and let your hands relax.

It's OK to feel rage and it's ok to feel the relief of it subsiding.



It's OK to fear sleep.

Lying down with your thoughts can be painful. Let the painful images come into and go out of your mind.

Some nights are just more difficult than others.



When you feel overwhelmed, imagine your painful thoughts as a dark, building thunderhead cloud.

As the thoughts build, imagine that electric feeling of an incoming storm.

Let the swirling cloud burst and a hard rain fall. Let thunder crash and lightning crackle down through the black sky.

Then let the storm pass, feel the wet earth and let the peace of a blue sky enter your mind.



If you awake in the middle of the night unable to go back to sleep, imagine all the muscles in your face slowly relaxing.

Start at the top of your head, down into your brow, your eyes, your cheekbones, your jaw, your neck. Take your time; there's no rush for sleep.



If you feel like you are treading water,
imagine yourself floating on gentle waves.

Stretch your arms out and let your mind
enter quietude.



If you are feeling lonely, imagine your heart as an empty pitcher.

Imagine everyone who cares about you pouring love into your heart. Some may pour one drop; some may pour a gallon.

Let others' love fill your heart.



When troubling, painful, or traumatic thoughts come into your mind, it's OK.

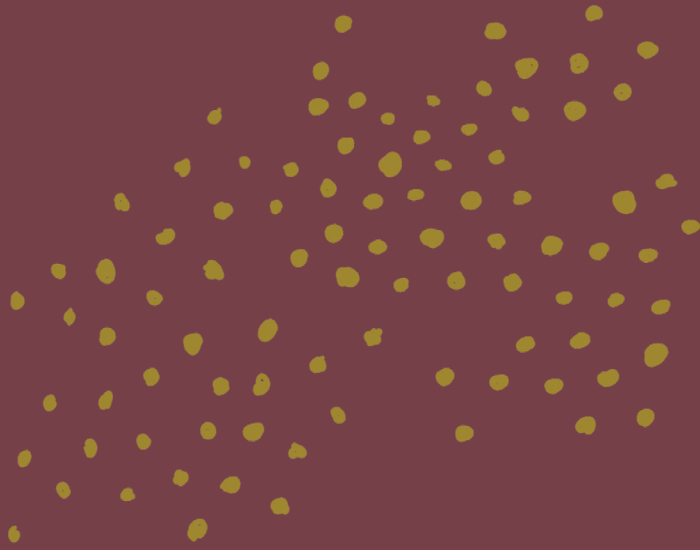
When those thoughts enter your mind, it's OK to let them enter without needing to be filed, organized, or solved.

Let them in and let them stay as long as they need to.

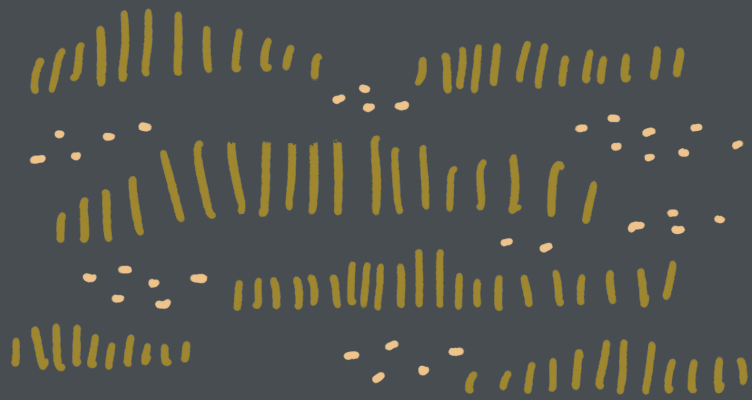


If you feel jealous, that's OK.

Imagine holding one heavy weight in each hand. There is room in your heart for both jealousy and happiness for others.



Anger can grow. Imagine using a power-washer on moss-covered concrete, with each breath slowly revealing the clean slate below.



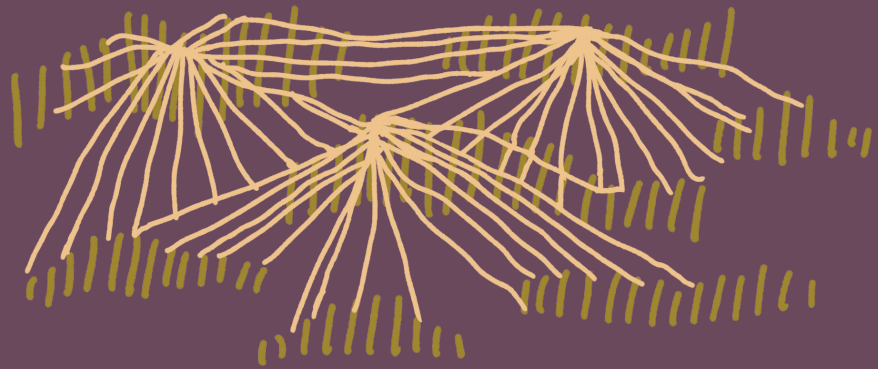
When you're feeling untethered, lie on your back. Let the weight of your body sink into the floor.

With each exhale, let your body melt into the ground. You're here. You're strong.



Sometimes we can feel like our body failed us. That's OK. Stand or sit up straight. Put your shoulders back.

Slowly raise your arms over your head and back down. Let your breath flow through your body and notice where it stagnates. It's OK to feel betrayed by your own body.

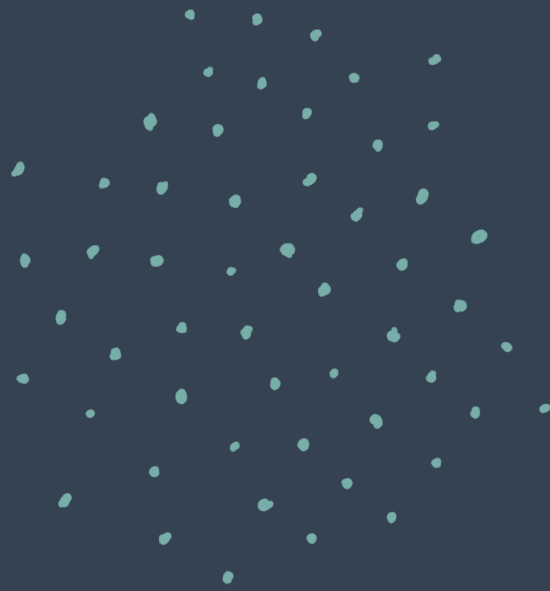


Imagine all the other people who find themselves in the same grief as you.

Think of the sun glistening on a thin gossamer strand connecting you with all of them. You're not alone.



Stand up straight with your arms out in front of you and move your hands slowly in a breaststroke motion. Imagine you are slogging through your grief. The process is slow, but you're making progress.



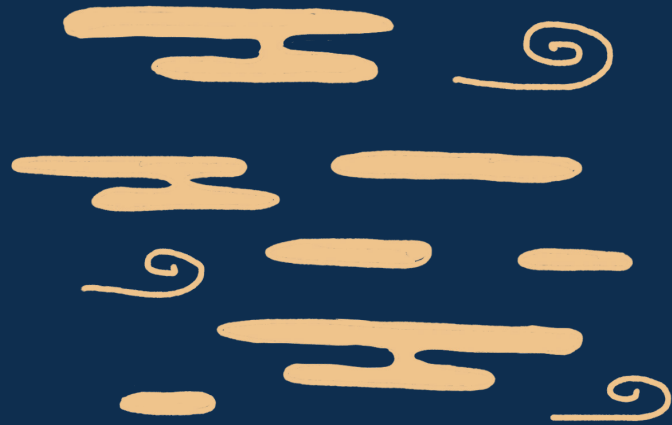
Sometimes people can say the dumbest things to us in our grief, even if they mean well.

Stand with your hands together in front of your ribs and slowly push your hands out and away as you exhale. Imagine all unwanted comments dissolving into thin air.



When you feel anxious about the future, imagine you are a large rock in the middle of a tranquil stream.

Let the water flow peacefully around you; there is no schedule to grief. You can let the water flow around you for as long as you need.



Grieving is hard work.

When you feel overwhelmed, stand tall and imagine a howling wind that you are facing head-on. Imagine the deafening sound of the wind moving around you and lean into it. You are powerful.



May you find what you seek.
May your loss be honored.
May your pain be met with compassion.
May your vigil be respected.
You are not alone.

Written with love by H. Laney

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