

Writing from Collective Grief

Writing prompts for Willamette Writers workshop

5 Gates Poem

Prepare to Write

Select one of the 5 Gates of Grief that feels most resonant for you today and write it in the center of a blank page. Brainstorm an association web of general, personal, local, and global details that flesh out this particular form of grief. Consider external examples and expressions as well as internal and embodied experiences of this grief. What does it sound like and feel like? Where does it live in your body? What is the texture or color of this grief? How do you hear it?

Write

Write a poem that explores and illustrates your chosen Gate of Grief. Feel into the level of emotional vulnerability that is accessible today and write from personal experience or collective experience or both. Does this poem tell a story? Does it teach? Does it invite us into a dialogue with the parts of us that grieve?

A Village Grieves

Tell the real or imagined story of a “village” sitting with collective grief. Perhaps you imagine a ceremony or setting in which two or more people will gather. Describe it. Write it as if it’s happening. Who is there? What is said or not said? What ritual is here? Or perhaps you write the true story of when you were a part of a village sitting with collective grief. Consider spaces where there tends to be cultural discomfort with this (eg. work, school, among friends or acquaintances, in public). As a third option, tell the story of a large community or globe grieving collectively. What could that look like, sound like, feel like? What could be the ceremony for our species to grieve together?

Additional Resources

[Finding Our Way: Seeds, Grief, and Memory with Rowan White](#)
[Tara Brach // Remembering Our Belonging Part 2](#)