

*MOURNING ROUTINE*

*VOLUME 1*

# The Worst Day of My Life!

*vulnerable musings and introduction by debbi litt*

The worst day of my life was the day I told my friend Heather that Eric was dead. We sat on her couch together, and after a few deep breaths, I was finally able to move my tongue and create the sounds that would tell her our friend was gone. I will never forget her expression. I can only describe it as absolute, inescapable horror. Our mutual anguish filled the room like a dense fog. She didn't want to sit on the couch anymore. We fled to her bedroom as if changing rooms had some power to undo the wreckage.

I managed to say the same piercing words to many other friends. A phone call in the mall while shopping for a black dress. A text when I could finally look at the words in tiny digital print. It felt like a spreading poison. Eventually the news started to move faster than me, which I was thankful for. His funeral was

well attended. I sat in the front pew, blankly staring at a dead cricket curled up in the corner. Afterward, we ate Mexican food and drank margaritas, a mirror of the Friday night ritual he and I used to indulge in.

I somehow emerged from that shadowy place, the underbelly of a friendship lost. I graduated from college. I moved to New York City. And still, this loss would hit me again and again, a sudden and overwhelming wave of sadness. Never as all-encompassing as when I first saw Heather's pained face, but I still felt chained to his death, drowning in it.

Once on the anniversary of his death I threw flowers into the ocean, attempting a new ritual in his memory, or perhaps as a peace offering; maybe if I appeased the beast I would be spared further suffering. Maybe I would learn the secrets of "moving on".

But now that he's been gone longer than I even knew him, I no longer believe moving on is in my best interest. There is no full recovery, there is only adaptation. I've stepped into an altered world where he is gone, and all I have are his photos, old messages, and the things I took from his room after he died. I want to share our memories, even though when I say his name I secretly think people are tired of hearing old stories about my dead friend.

So let's talk about death. Let's embrace and normalize grief, in all its painful forms. Let's learn to support each other, especially when someone's grief doesn't look like your own. Let's resurrect the intimacy

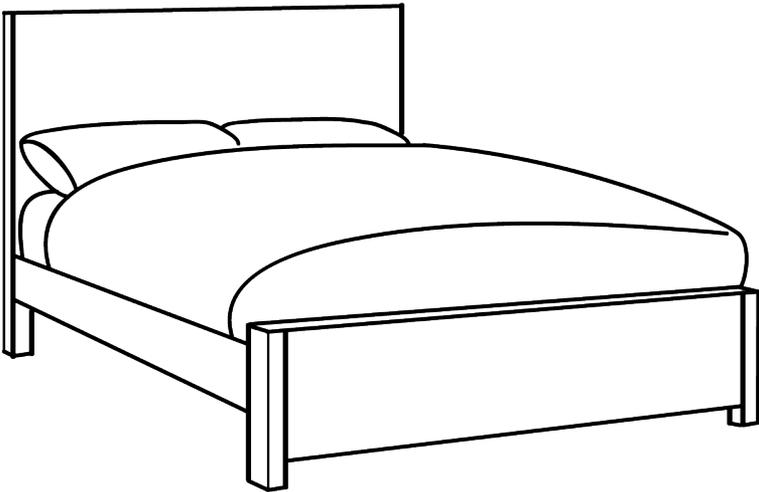
and personalization of dying, deathcare, and bereavement. We plan for graduations, weddings, birthdays, and retirements...why wait until it's too late to prepare for arguably the most momentous step in our lives— the end?

I created Mourning Routine as a modern *memento mori*, a method to work through the pain and uncertainty of death. This book contains seven activities to help you begin planning for your dream funeral. You can complete these activities with friends or family, alone, or with your pet goldfish—just have a little fun while contemplating our unfaltering mortality.



# Design Your Ideal Deathbed!

Envision your perfect deathbed. What does the room look like? What smells do you smell? What sounds do you hear? Who is present at your side? Sketch your vision below.



Be sure to mention to your loved ones that if your wishes are not perfectly executed, you will come back to haunt them.



# Create a Funeral Playlist!

Hey, Mr. DJ! Why not curate your own funeral playlist? Personally, I want to get people in the mood to grieve, but the songs you choose don't have to be sad. Get 'em dancing!

## Sample Funeral Playlist:

### **“I Will Follow You Into the Dark” - Death Cab For Cutie**

*Let Ben Gibbard's death positivity soothe you in this moment.*

### **“I Don't Want to Let you Down” - Sharon Van Etten**

*This song is devastating; great for when people are being ushered to their seats. Quiet contemplation encouraged.*

### **“The Fourth of July” - Sujan Stevens**

*Everyone should be bawling at this point.\**

### **“A Fond Farewell” - Elliott Smith**

*Feel free to tell that story about me lying on the floor in my empty room and sobbing to Elliott Smith.*

### **“Tonight” - Iggy Pop**

*Everything will be all right tonight.*

*\*If people's moods are ever too lifted just put on Sufjan's “Carrie & Lowell” album and sit in silence until heard in entirety.*



Stream my funeral mix:  
<http://bit.ly/formyfuneral>

# It's Eulogy Time!

What can I say about \_\_\_\_\_? \_\_\_\_\_ had the heart of  
NAME PRONOUN

a \_\_\_\_\_, and was always \_\_\_\_\_ others.  
ANIMAL VERB ENDING IN -ING

I remember this one time, we were traveling to \_\_\_\_\_  
LOCATION

and I realized I had left my \_\_\_\_\_ at home. Well, can  
NOUN

you believe that \_\_\_\_\_ turned the car around, drove all  
PRONOUN

the way to \_\_\_\_\_ and bought me a new \_\_\_\_\_?  
LOCATION NOUN

Then \_\_\_\_\_ said, "Next time, just pack a \_\_\_\_\_!!".  
NAME NOUN

What a riot. It's going to be hard to \_\_\_\_\_ without  
VERB

\_\_\_\_\_, they were always \_\_\_\_\_ to  
NAME VERB ENDING IN -ING

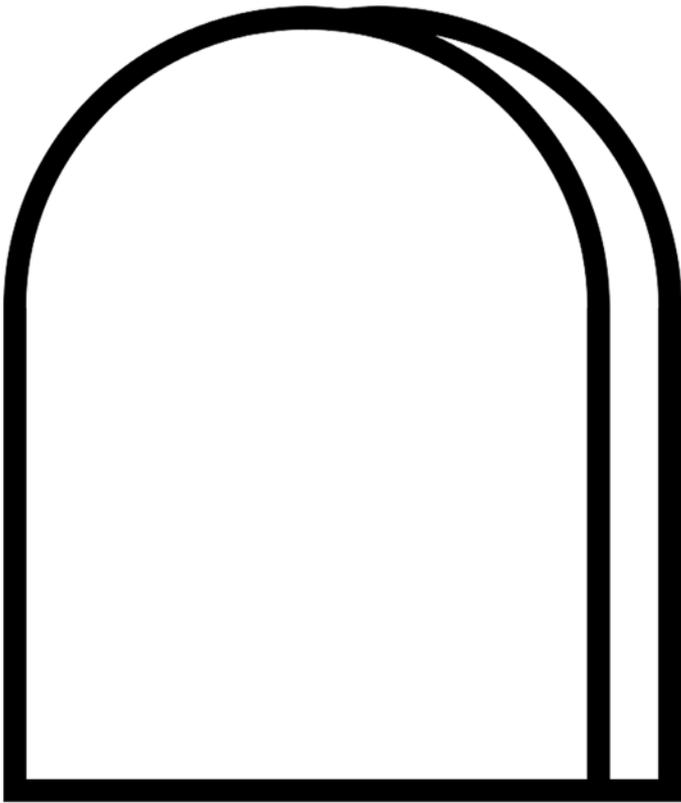
good causes, like the \_\_\_\_\_ Fund for \_\_\_\_\_  
PROPER NOUN ADJECTIVE

\_\_\_\_\_ Research. I loved \_\_\_\_\_ dearly, and I'm  
NOUN NAME

thankful for the years we had together.

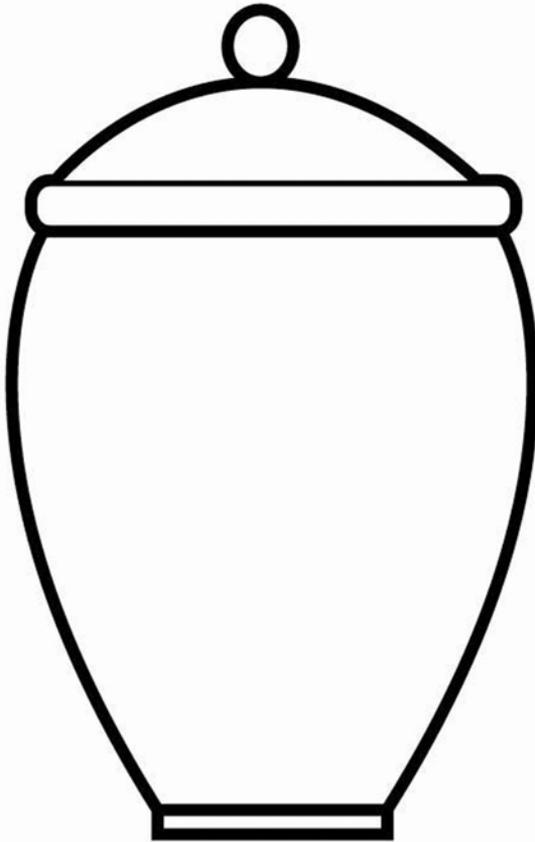
# Bedazzle Your Headstone!

This ain't your grandma's epitaph! First, reflect on the words, symbols and ideas you live by. Then decorate your physical body's eternal intombment.



# Or, Bedazzle Your Urn!

If you prefer cremation over burial, let your urn express the essence of you! Make it a statement piece for your mantel.



# **In Memoriam!**

We are gone, but not forgotten. How do you want to be remembered? Brainstorm ideas for how your friends and family can celebrate your life and share memories.

**ON MY BIRTHDAY...**

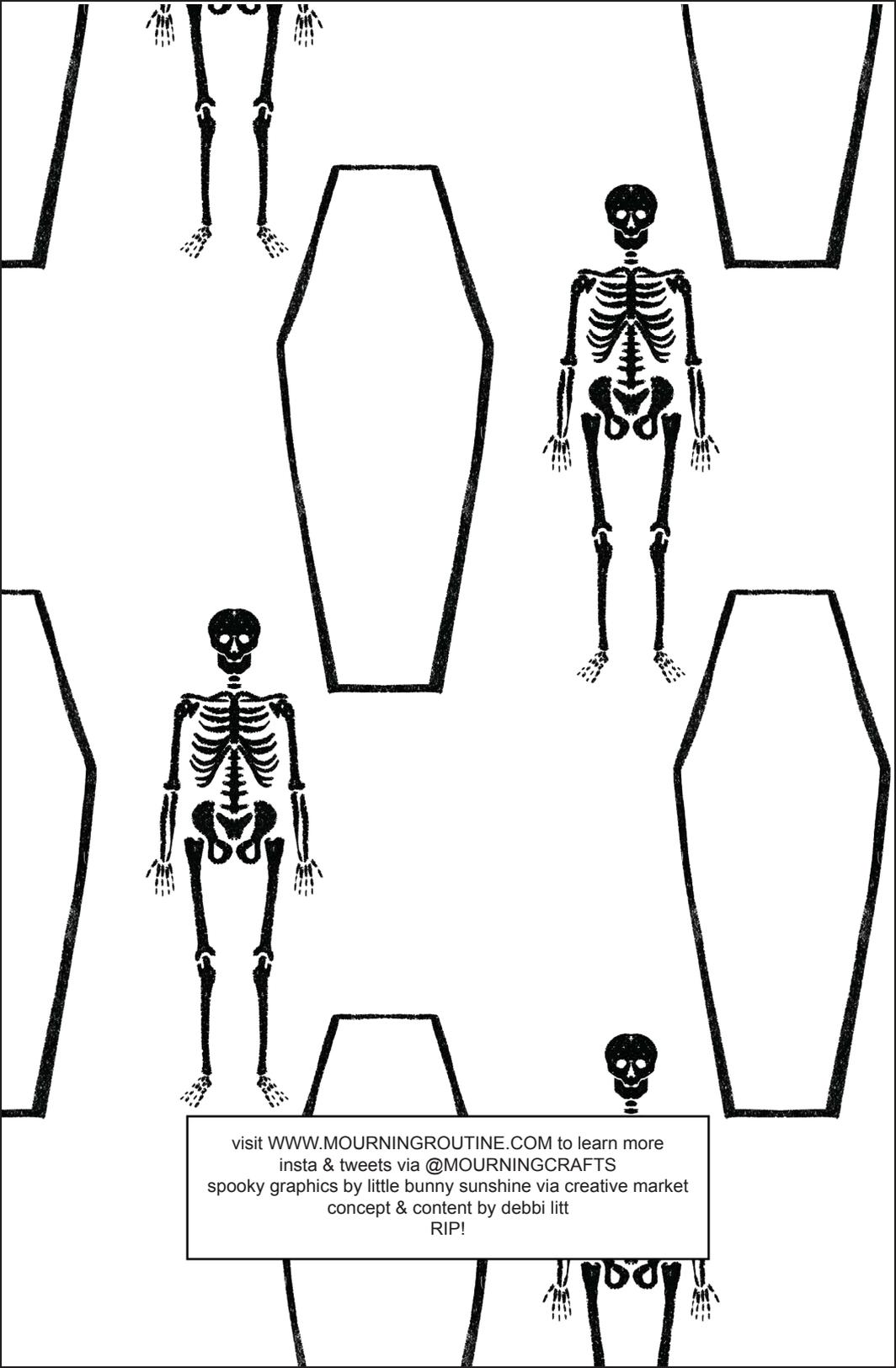
**DURING HOLIDAYS...**

**IN MY HONOR...**

**THINK OF ME WHEN...**



DEAR FRIENDS, I ASK THAT YOU REMEMBER ME BY GETTING  
AN OUROBOROS TATTOO ON YOUR LOWER BACK, JUST LIKE  
SCULLY IN THAT ONE EPISODE OF THE X FILES.



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