Loss: the ultimate philosophical problem

Loss is perhaps the ultimate philosophical problem – and death, only incidentally and to the extent it is experienced as loss by those who remain alive. The great absolute architectonics of systematic thought are intended to secure the world against loss. Maturity is achieved when things are let go, left to be on their own, allowed their specificity; for although they become then most fully themselves, they become then most fully losable. . . . The more precious a thing is, the greater becomes its power to hurt us by simply being absent. We end up ‘leaving each thing as it is’ in two sense of the word ‘leave’.

(Jan Zwicky 1991. Lyric Philosophy p.164)

Philosophy ought really to be written only as a poetic composition.
(Ludwig Wittgenstein 1980 in Zwicky 1991)

learning about leaving

i just thought
when someone goes
you can’t be with them
    rain falls
    in the gathering twilight
the room echoes
his child’s voice
    a hiss of water
    a whistle of wind
catches up
    the thickening silence
his eye spark carries
the sadness of
new knowing

that’s why sometimes
when someone goes away
you get sad
and they can’t
Loss is not only an adult affair. Young children experience loss, as do adolescents and older children. It comes in different ways and issues of mortality, separation, and grief can accompany the loss of a parent, a grandparent, a sibling, a pet, a friend or be stirred by many simpler and less final separations and displacements. This paper sets out to explore loss and it is important to understand it includes the lives and experiences of children and youth.

I recently spent an afternoon with a colleague who has recently lost her partner of many years. She recounted a story of her two grandsons and their reactions to Poppa’s death. The younger of the two boys told her that Poppa had visited him while he was sleeping last night. She asked how he knew that and he said that Poppa was standing by his bed watching him sleep and that he saw him. The older brother scoffed at seeing Poppa because he is no longer here, he is dead. My colleague pressed her older grandson to say how he thinks of Poppa now that he is gone. He said that he feels his arms about him holding him. “Is that not like seeing Poppa?” she asked. After pondering the question he admitted that is was. These two young boys are maintaining some link with a man who loved them, who they miss. They are processing grief, managing loss in dream life, in sensate experience. It is not so important whether these experiences are factual as it is they are mechanisms of comfort in loss that these children are doing to face their first significant experience of separation and mortality. Loss is not only a philosophical problem but
also a spiritual one and much in religious traditions is an attempt to engage the issues of loss and comfort and support the grieving.

**losses**

losses pile up
cordwood
severed ends, cold
in the settling night
stark in the silver-blue
winter moon
against an early snow

far away
a wolf howl
echoes down
through my sinews
and bone
echoes back sorrow
the loneliness of death

Zwicky, a Canadian philosopher, musician and poet claims that the great systems of knowledge are “intended to secure the *world* against loss”. She could have added that the great spiritual and religious systems of the world seek a similar outcome – to meet loss, to provide a way through it and to protect us against its impact. There is a search for security against the mystery and the devastation that can accompany loss. Death “to the extent it is experienced as loss by those who remain alive” is an encounter that is often the most difficult. But loss is always with us, in a multitude of forms and intensities. Every transition in life is a loss of some kind as endings and beginnings are entangled: endings carry the potential of loss.

There are cultures that have practiced ritual rites of passage to acknowledge the losses embedded in transitions (see Mahdi, Foster & Little 1987; Raphael 1988; and Scott 1998). At wedding ceremonies
some families maintain the custom of giving away their daughters, a gesture that may invoke tears: ending and beginning marked. Loss noted in ritual.

In some traditional coming of age ceremonies there were mock funeral rites for the child followed by birth ceremonies for the new adult. Immersion baptism ritually echoes these very old practices where the gesture of down into the water symbolizes dying and the uplifting from the water, birth or rebirth.

These rituals demonstrate the ancient lineage of securing humans against loss, its potency and the need to contain it and its impact on the living. From early in cultural development, there was an understanding that transitions included loss and that by addressing the losses in ceremonial ways there was preparation for managing death. Meeting the unknowns set loose by the mystery of death was necessary. Rituals, symbols, and ceremonial language were gathered “to secure the world against loss”, to protect people from the pain of loss and communities from the disorder that loss may produce.

**Poetry as Method**

I began with a poem and offer here a brief explanation of why I use poetry to engage loss. Poetry is a way of inquiry that allows one to enter experience and meet the intensity of events. Loss pushes us up against the unknown, the not yet known and sometimes the unknowable: that which is felt to be beyond comprehension. Jane Hirschfield, American poet and essayist, in writing about poetry says:

> to understand the world beyond the narrow self . . . it is necessary to be available to the unknown, to be touched and transformed by it. Habitual mind, sleepiness, and fear of the unfamiliar keep us comfortably within our own rooms, where we could make our way in the dark and
never stumble against an unexpected wall or into a corner. But by clinging to the familiar, we lose the opportunity to discover the broader possibilities of our own experience. If we would seek out this widened knowledge, it is necessary first to leave the house of the ordinary self and the usual mind. (Hirschfield 1994, 110)

It is vital for human wellbeing to overcome the fear that shuns difficult experience, that avoid grief and make ourselves “available to the unknown” and “discover the broader possibilities of our own experience”. It is also important to remember that children live closer to the unknown mystery than adults do because they live with many more unknowns in their daily lives with many experiences outside their understanding and their capacity to voice their experiences.

Hirschfield adds: “The poet must learn from what dwells outside his or her capacities and language, must learn from silence and exile” (p.110). Loss may be experienced as exile and can take us to silence somewhere beyond the ordinary. Poetry grows out of listening at the threshold, going beyond the familiar doorway, to return with words that draw close to articulating loss, giving it voice. Poetry offers a way into the midst of difficult experience. A poem may provide words for grief’s intensity and loss’s disordering if the writer has the “the willingness to be inhabited by and speak for others, including those beyond the realm of the human” (Hirschfield 1998, 208). The rendering of separation can be experienced as being “beyond the realm of the human”.

Poetry allows a poet and the audience to enter the territory of loss, invites personal engagement and provides space for interpretation. As Hirschfield suggests poetry can lead one outside the ordinary self into the mysteries of loss that religion and philosophy have attempted to address in language and ceremony.
Ironically, poetry itself remains mysterious and inaccessible to many. It has often been taught as something dead, something to be dissected and untangled for its hidden meanings. There is little sense of what Hirschfield says about the poet as explorer of liminal space, beyond the ordinary. Or that poetry is active and provocative of experience offering a space for response and engagement. When poetry is allowed to speak, it may have hidden meanings but, more importantly, it has heightened intensity, compacted narrative and invokes emotions, traditions and the unseen. Some questions arise for an academic use of poetry: can it speak without textual interpretative accompaniment? Does it require an analytic text to make it work? Can it carry theory? Can it stand on its own?

Michel Serres, a French philosopher and scholar of culture claims: “The narrative is often a complete theory, and theory often a thinned out narrative” (Serres 1991, 217). In poetry the density of narrative may make theory harder to tease out, may make the quest for meaningful interpretation difficult. It may make it unnecessary. Poetry is a declaration of experience, insight and understanding. It may be enough to remain with the poetry and let go commentary. Here is the risk. Zwicky (1991, 164) points out: “Maturity is achieved when things are let go, left to be on their own, allowed their specificity; for although they become then most fully themselves, they become then most fully losable.” Letting poetry be on its own may also leave us open to losing sense, losing control.

I hope that the poetry will be worth the risk, that it can be seen as a telling that matters, taking the reader into experiences of loss, into the lives of others. Losses are not singular but can cover long stretches of time: eternities that accumulate as overlapping tiers (tears), remaining unfinished, temporally and emotionally.
complicated grief

the way deaths pile up
corpses stacked on memories
press on hope
submerge it in loss

how deep, how dark
that pool fed by
the icy waters of forgetfulness
that smother light when

sadness grows
until even putting on
one shoe is work
to overwhelm a day

when sleep cannot be
because the night is dreadful
rigid bodies
demand to be noticed

remain unavoidable
in the stillness
alone when panic sets in
when it seems the pool

will swallow one more
consume one so close
too near to bear and how
they offer drugs

to block the pain, smother
grief, dull sorrow
its presence enemy
pretend that forgetting

is best and flatness
an ideal state, smoothed out
with a darkness that hides
darkness, coats loss

in a sheen of denial
calls it other names
leaves feeling empty
written over with cure.

In death we are pushed up against the edge of being human. The response of history has been to offer beliefs that address loss in ritual, in communal acts of comfort, in accepted forms of dress, periods of mourning. There is a practical wisdom in containing loss, not trying to make it disappear but giving it expression. In the contemporary world, where strong emotion is considered dangerous, we use a theory of chemical management to quell the impact of loss. Throughout the ages, the living, young and old have been left to grapple with questions of the missing: have they passed over? Do they cease to be? How does life go on with the hole of their absence so thoroughly present? Death was part of the difficulty of living and understanding life.

I attended a medical school graduation ceremony a few years ago and was startled to hear the faculty medical ethicist, who gave the convocation address, speak boldly of the new doctors as heroes in the fight against illness and death. Death had become other, the enemy: not part of the cycle of life. Medical warfare renders grief an act of defeat rather than a necessary response to loss. Loss becomes hidden: response to it silenced.

Traditions that honour ancestors, that believe in life after death, that look for resurrection, or life in paradise; traditions that imagine a land of shades that sleep and do not remember; traditions that believe in past lives and reincarnation are all working to unravel loss, to address the continuity of life as cycle, as return, as always more. These are attempts by philosophy and religion to address the impossibility of loss.

Loss makes the discomfort that accompanies change inescapable as so often loss comes unexpectedly. Hirschfield claims a writer is someone
who has learned to live in the liminal, marginal space where transitions take place, where the marginal is felt, lived.

“Awareness of emptiness brings forth the heart of compassion.” ...it is in the spirit of nonpossession and surrender that art flourishes best. This makes the liminal writer not only an independent thinker but an engaged one – when a person identifies with the full range of citizens of a place, sentient and nonsentient, he or she cannot help but speak on their behalf. (Hirschfield 1998, 210)

Poetry offers a way to speak for others from “the heart of compassion” and to do philosophy lyrically in respect of Wittgenstein and Zwicky, to ponder loss in its many forms. In poetry offered here, the silence of pain can be heard and may resonate. Attunement to the other sets off responses in the hearers/readers that may echo in their own lives, and in that resonance, offer ways to meet losses already being borne. A “heart of compassion” may be awakened.

**what does loss teach**

pain lessons unfold inside the day
startle me: an unseen train
knocks me off my tracks, sends me
to my knees broken again
breath lost, tight in my chest

the surprise of absence
keeps happening, keeps opening
its jaws to devour me, remind me
how you mattered, how you’re gone
how it cannot change

more lessons descend in the night
when emptiness has weight
impresses on me the loneliness of darkness
when rooms echo with your absence
the house hollow, weeping

or is it my wails that i don’t
know i am making, that escape
from my belly, rattle the bleak windows
when i think of you, your scent
that still hovers here, teasing me

what if there is no letting go, no
release: the one thing i am told by
those who claim to know i must do
to survive yet refuse, wanting
a thread to you to span the tearing
dead is a longer learning than life
its own eternity, presence wrapped
in quiet absence that i hide with
a normal face, all the tears flowing in
to nurture a pool that holds your image

on its shimmering skin, in its sweet
oblivion, out of sight to others but
close for me, a gift for survival
a way to carry you forward more
than memory, more than gone

there are theories of afterlife and
dreams of reunion that i do not
hold, nor can embrace knowing
now i live after life with you and will
keep you close against the rules.

We do try to keep the lost with us, to hold them in our minds: how
often do eulogies say: you will never be forgotten, or you will be with me
always.

redhead

he said when she died
after the second surgery
that redheads were the best
she was one and he never
wanted any other

our road trip away from loss
never happened, he died too
dropped like a stone, disappeared
into grief, the river so deep
where he entered

her hair is the same red
a fire mane, curls, knots
she ties up on her head
his words in my hands
yearn to touch her hair

as if its colour flecked with gray
will let me understand
his desire, his loss
i know her hair would
not be enough

how their shadows come to me
when i see her and have
to quell the urge to break
rules and touch her

enter his world
travel with his eyes
his desire
keeping him alive.

**Widening the Gyre**

Loss has other causes. It is not only death or the hope of keeping
memory alive. Loss can haunt families over generations. Death may
linger in families where an accumulation of losses over time can include
many threads: the tangles of emotions, relationships in conflict, affections
not offered.

**wounded they are**

her ego limps across the patio
pretends to be strong
    straight
leans to the right
hides her need for power
disguises
her fear, weakness
carries old burdens, wounds

he waits for the barbecue to blaze
to roast
stale lies into something
edible or into cinder and ash

they recall ghosts of fathers perhaps
mothers who never
said I love you
and mothers, maybe fathers
who somehow disappeared
when it mattered
leaving holes
with jagged edges
    unfinished pride
and horrid loneliness

all the losses, the missing
    the dead
who shadow days
slither in the night against
dreams that
never get remembered
and echo progenitors’ voices
in words and gestures
    that grate
on the present generation
ears swollen and cold
from all the head butting

what would be enough
to let peace come
    offset
restlessness, shame?
the fear that nothing will
ever be enough
to satisfy the shades

what comfort is needed to let
sleep’s embrace take her
or him
into the quiet of peace?

as if weakness is not enough
as if we are alone
   in hidden doubts
so let be, let be

limp freely, cower, cry
   let go
maybe laughter
will come
   maybe joy.

Families remain the site where the struggle for maturity is continuous and where we learn, or do not learn, of love and being loved. Love is fertile ground for loss. “The more precious a thing is, the greater becomes its power to hurt us by simply being absent” (Zwicky 1991, 164). It is not in the singular moment at the end of a love affair or the breaking of a family that loss is felt, but in ordinary places in moments of daily living, where events repeat, where return produces contradictions while the past and present become entangled.

**a family feast**

*for Kasia*

the dishes are in disarray piled
one on another: kielbasa, dark rye
beet red borscht acrid with memories

   that girl remembers
hiding in silence to
become invisible
   with quiet
the holes in the wall
dishes breaking
fists striking

there is a door somewhere but it
always leads back to the same 
bleak room, the same table where 
shame spills out that the family pretends 
is not there. cups overflow with curses 
that fly like darts across the table 
careen off the walls and echo in the holes

that girl watches 
soaks in the bile 
shrinks and grows 
all at once 
her own darkness 
seeks escape yet 
is held in fascination

on the wall faded red roses 
hang upside down, recall a long ago 
gesture of love, gratitude 
lost in the scent of vomit 
spilled vodka stains the linens 
his face pale, frozen 
in loneliness

that girl whispers 
kindness, offers 
compassion from 
a well she cannot 
remember, rising against 
the rage, its hate 
cradles a father’s 
broken life

her adult eyes 
watch her caring 
she hears 
a different tongue 
calling her to go 
to give up, she 
almost does 
but survives 
to keep alive 
memory, love.
Family may be a haven to contain the fracturing of loss. Love cannot erase the value of what is lost but it may offer energy that can be used in healing the ruptures, even when the loss is a consequence of love. Loss is not a respecter of age: young and old can be impacted and changed by these encounters with grief, with relationships ended.

**that time**

*Home is the place where,*  
*when you have to go there,*  
*They have to take you in.*  
*(from Robert Frost’s Death of Hired Man)*

we knew you were hurt  
when you came home  
your mouth tight, face held  
you with no words  
eyes grim, intense  
we had to take you in  
let you be lost, sad  
you had a wound  
too fresh for a scab  
we could hear you cry  
at night but you did not  
tell us why or who had  
done this to you, or what  
one day we came home  
you were gone, left a note  
*Thanks, it was what*  
*I had to do. Love*

**a boy learns**

not yet three he was  
too young for the way  
loss tore into him  
the way  
he lashed out  
after she was gone  
home to England
the way he hoped she would return
did not and how anger
flooded his senses
the way he leaned into her
the day she went away
kissed her on her mouth as she sat
on the top step, him standing
making them the same height
the way it wounded him, gave him
some odd present delicacy so that
in high school teenage girls
worked to get him to respond
sensing he knew more
about love than other boys
but not knowing he did not know
what it was he had or how
to let out his knowing
with them

traces of you

there are traces of you
on the fabric of this wall
we passed so often
together
painted over by time
and other lovers
the fragments
cannot be seen
only someone who knows
your marks are there
can know they are covered

there are traces of you
on the skin of my chest
where you rubbed naked
against me leaving
bits of you entangled
in my flesh altering
my genetics, my rhythms
so i cannot move
without your pulse
beating on mine

there are traces of you
in the words of that song
that winds its way
from my ear
to the floor of my soul
where we danced
and played against time
where i dreamed music
that would never end
but now is bitter silent

there are traces of you
in that waft of perfume
on the Quadra bus
a remembered scent
that crashes you
into my heart
but it is not you
only a memory of you
laughing at me
sniffing your neck

there are traces of you
i cannot erase
or escape
in the passage of days,
traces i cannot forget
nor wish to ignore
traces that taste bitter
that fill my mouth
nostrils, eyes leave me
always, always, always
missing you.

And Wider Still
Some families face losses of another kind when one of their children enter
into the territory of chronic disease, or psychosis/“madness”: forms of
passage in unknown landscapes and unaccountable journeys; passing
over into the unknown outside of the ordinary mind, ordinary life, ordinary expectations. Such losses make more evident the persistence of loss and its continuance. Loss may distort time so that it becomes anchored in the future as well as the past.

my feet will always be wet, he will always be lost

a pool with no edge
i’ve stumbled in
every way i go is wet
feet splash
the dark flow pulls
tips me off balance
the current of madness

i balk, hope there will be
an end, know it will not
be done, i’m told
he will not be back
all the way, there’ll be
holes to swallow him
hold our tears, salt
burning the bruises

loss season

the withered rose twists
in the afternoon wind
the only blossom left
faded yellow to brown
rosehips without red
shriveling in the cold
leaves curled by an early
winter storm: loss
follows me on this walk
haunts my thoughts
her tormented face
looking away and down
as she weighs
impossible paths
darkened by her disease
choosing between
what cannot be and
what cannot be done

how can the long arc
of decline in one
so young, so full
of possibility become
a journey of dead ends?

how can i walk
her path as companion
and carry hope
as mine fades
in the falling light?

Barbara Schneider, a Canadian communications scholar whose son had a journey into “madness” that altered her life and her research (see Schneider 2010 Hearing (our) Voices), interviewed a group of mothers of children diagnosed with schizophrenia and wrote a paper (Schneider 2005, 333-340) that spoke to their experiences of loss. She told me (personal communication, 2010) that she could not read the data she had gathered for six months without weeping. Her own experience was too close in their narratives.

the sorrow of mothers

to enter
the sorrow of mothers
where
hurt has power
inside that
- hidden hollow
love is torn
in a tearing
that does not end, cannot
the lost one lost
In disordered mind
disease
its chaos
living on

that endless illness
claws
at the wound
keeps it open, raw
a womb that
will not close
cannot
a birth long past
that labours on
wave
after wave
heart contractions.

In meeting loss, in providing some way to protect and support one another, cultures have turned to ritual, to art, to words and music. Zwicky (in Ruzesky 2008, 92-97) offers another insight when she touches on the work of liturgy and ritual as a way to engage loss.

The praise song and the elegy are two sides of the same thing and they are annealed. We speak elegies when the thing that naturally draws praise from us is gone. It is in this praising and mourning – really experiencing what is, and what is happening – that we begin the reconstructive work of changing the culture. (p. 96)

She ties together the language of religion and adoration with the traditions of poetry and oration used to celebrate the dead. She recognizes the repair that such work can engender in rebuilding lives and the social order that can be broken by loss.

the hardest thing letting go

hard to let go
let away
always a gap in loss
taking breath
    leaving holes
passages

so many little deaths
    little births
as the child
dies to here
    to be borne
somewhere other

a strange delicacy
    not breaking
the cracked shell
open, letting
    emergence
from within
have its own
time

the caterpillar
    on the branch
does disappear
in the making
    of a monarch
wings drying
after the chrysalis
    has opened
flight now
    possible

Much religious and spiritual energy at the personal (emotional) and
the cultural (ceremonial) levels are forms of praise and elegy tightly
joined. Systematic philosophy and religious practice are devoted to
securing us against loss because of the devastation, the way loss can
disrupt life going on and throws open questions of meaning, value and
mystery. Cultural work is necessary. We must be willing to stay with the
impossibility of loss. Hirschfield says: "Poetry’s work is the clarification
and magnification of being” (Hirschfield 1998, vii). In speaking to and of loss, poetry offers a way to clarify and magnify the labours of being human. Loss is part of being human. It is never neutral. It can be astonishingly cruel to those who are ambushed by accident, by violence or by suicide. The last of these three can be the hardest journey.

Something unspeakable arrives in a family. Silence and exile surround the one suicided. Their departure is often silent, with no traces. They and those who survive them are left in exile, often cloaked in silence, or in the place of forbidden speaking.

**unfathomable**

i

**no mistake**

middle of the night
the knock persists
two young policemen
at the door
something not right
   *may we come in*
   *may we sit down*
something has happened
   *your son, Nick, was found*
   *in his room, dead*
there must be some mistake
   *he appears to have taken*
   *his own life*
there must be some mistake

the world falls open
spins
into surreality
there is
no mistake
a dead son, his body
and the bottomless pain
that adheres to the days
the weeks sliding
into the future

ii
no signs

this death had no warning
no traces
no online research
on a best way to kill oneself
no broken heart rejection
suspicious drugs, history of illness
only one happy son

so you thought

and a stack of goodbye
letters wishing everyone well
hopes for their lives
words of love but
not one word
of why

iii
no end

it is not over, his end
an end with no end
how you live around
the emptiness, he
used to fill

the corner where
his ashes sit
the candle you light
when the family gathers
a flickering remembrance
you have to blow out
at the end of the day
the sentences you stop
where you might make
him disappear
and hesitate

his absence an intruder
leave the dead to the dead

was it not: leave
the dead to bury the dead?
that Jesus was supposed to say
complicating death
noting
how easy it is to die yet
keep going
the call to forget
let sleeping dogs lie
is a lie
the dog is not sleeping
but waits at the river
for the dead to arrive
to howl the ferry
to the near shore

for crossing over
in passage to the hordes
of the forgotten, the stones
the grubs, the blind worms
with no memory: how to tell
what life is when there
is no past and the future
flat when death looks
like how life is now

remember, remember.

Lest we forget: the call that comes in maintaining memory. This
call echoes the ritual of memorializing the death of soldiers lost in wars
past: praise and elegy blended; where winning is full of loss that must be
valorized. Remembering is the task that follows loss; that maintains
relationships over time and that is the promise so often given. Some begin this work as children; some come to it later in life and unfortunately some refuse to engage loss and suffer because of it.

In trying to speak to an “ultimate philosophical problem” I do not offer answer or conclusion. The attempt has been to engage loss, to be compassionate about facing the immense difficulty that losses bring.

Coda
In her unpublished MA thesis Carys Cragg (2005) explores adolescent grief and the process of maintaining a relationship with her deceased father through her diaries and poetry. This passage from her thesis is constructed as a dialogue between her older and younger selves and speaks to poetry and writing as grief work for adolescents. She began doing this at 11 years of age.

carys: The poetry was more about my dad, not necessarily to him. I knew he was paying attention to it because he could somehow see what I was writing. And I would sometimes refer to my poetry in my journal entries. Some of the poetry was for class but then I kept them and continued to write for myself. Some of the poems are addressed to no one in particular. One of the poems was for my mom for a birthday present. It was about heaven and my dad being somewhere like that.

CARYS: Heaven in a religious sense?

carys: No, not like that. But just that I thought he was still around, that he went somewhere, his soul did not die along with his body. I
tried to visualize his presence, his hugs when I was sad. My idea of where he had ‘gone’ changed over the years. Earlier on I referred to places like heaven. Then it became more of the idea that he was in me, in my heart and soul. He lived in my thoughts, my memories. So the writing became more of an attempt to keep him alive because I had control over how I expressed those thoughts and memories. Why not have him live in my writing, I guess. (p.133-114)

And:

CARYS: You mentioned something about your theory of grief and loss in your poetry. What do you mean by that?

carys: There were so many people telling me what I was supposed to be feeling. I didn’t agree with or respect what they had to say, so I came up with my own ideas. And no one else around me seemed to understand so I wrote it. The first few poems came to me in English class. We were learning different forms of poetry. Haikus and shape poems. Everyone was writing jokes, about cars, about sports, about the person sitting next to them. Whatever. And this is what I came up with. I would sit there and think about what I could possibly write. I remember once, my teacher said that there was a minute left to write. I came up with the haiku poem. I continued writing poems about my experience of grief. Somehow writing it, it became okay. Once I wrote a poem or a journal entry it didn’t feel so unclear and confusing in my mind. It was there, in front of me, and somehow that made it okay. (p. 117-118)
Adults who work with children and youth need not only to pay attention to their own losses but also to be aware that children can and do experience loss and are seeking ways to grapple with what is an ultimate philosophical and spiritual problem for them as well.

References


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1 All of the poems in this paper are the work of the author and except for two of the poems used, appear in his poetry book: *black onion* (2012). All of the poems are used with permission of the author.