



YOU SAY YOU'VE LOST YOUR MOTHER

by Daniel J. Bressler, MD, FACP

OVER THE PAST YEAR, the mothers of some of my closest friends have died. Some deaths came as the culmination of a long illness. Some were unexpected. Some deaths were seen by my friends as a blessing because their mother was terribly suffering. Some deaths seemed cruelly unfair.

There are many polite phrases and euphemisms we use to talk about someone having died. Depending on your cultural and religious orientation, one might say “at rest” or “with the angels” or “left this earthly plane” or “at peace.” The one I hear most often from a bereaved survivor is “to lose” someone. Perhaps

this phrase contains within it the implicit hope that the decedent will be found at some future time.

This poem, dedicated to my friends and my patients who are bereaved, leaves a suggestion that their mothers can, in fact, be found already. **SDP**



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You Say You've Lost Your Mother

*When you were young and tender
Filted by the crowd
Your mother held you sweetly
And said your name out loud*

*You say you've lost your mother
But that will never do
A constant like no other
Magnetic north to you.*

*When you were young and tragic
Battered by some storm
Your mother's common magic
Would keep you safe from harm*

*You say you've lost your mother
She's faded with the light
Her image just dimmer
Till she merged into the night*

*When you were young and pensive
And all your dreams stillborn
Your mother softly grieved with you
And helped you to be calm*

*You say you've lost your mother
Just her time to go
Perhaps you still might find her
Within the sun's last glow*

*When you were young and rootless
Bewildered and forlorn
Your mother would appear to you
And steer you safely home*

*You say you've lost your mother
That she is gone for good
Let's hope that you're mistaken
Some words misunderstood*

*When you were young and arrogant
Spreading boasts around
Your mother gave you gravity
And drew you back to ground*

*You say you've lost your mother
That she has gone away
She'll never arm-in-arm with you
Nor call from far away*

*But you're no longer fragile
Long flown from childhood woe
Your mother's work long over
She chose her time to go*

*You say you lost your mother
But that will never do
An ingenious undercover
Your mother lives in you*