

A Week in Images and Quotes

October - 2025

It's amazing what I discover as I review some of Marsha's journals. The following acrostic was found from January 2001. I think I can incorporate some of these elements as I go forward in my life. Thanks, dear.

Marsha's School for Life

Movement

(dance, yoga, walking)

A dventure

(following my passion)

R enewal

(each moment is a new beginning)

S piritual connection

(breathing, meditation, prayer, awareness of sacred)

H ealthy eating

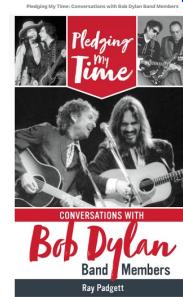
(flexible, moderation, personal, livable)

A ll together now

(synergy)

WEDNESDAY

01



THURSDAY

02

Recently read this intriguing set of interviews with individuals associated with Bob Dylan. Perhaps equally interesting would have been the experiences of individuals who were asked, but declined, to be interviewed.

FRIDAY

03

- Over time, we grow to accept that the one constant of being in a relationship with our grief is that it'll evolve and change. p. 41
- But by expressing our experiences, we get a chance to examine more fully what happened, to consider the variety of ways we can narrate our own story to others and also to ourselves. p. 42
- A phrase by Sol Guy (as captured by Carla Fernandez) resonated with me: *Healing through Creative Practices*. p. 47
- Oftentimes our care practices, when practiced collectively, give us a reason to slow down, connect with other people, and remember we aren't as isolated as we may feel. p. 56

Carla Fernandez, *Renegade Grief*

SATURDAY

04

Writing is a bit like swimming. You learn writing by doing it and you learn swimming by doing it. Nobody learns how to swim by reading a book about swimming and nobody learns how to write by reading a book about writing. If you want to learn how to write, write a lot and you will get better at it.

Robert Munsch

Change happens by listening and then starting a dialogue with the people who are doing something you don't believe is right. Jane Goodall

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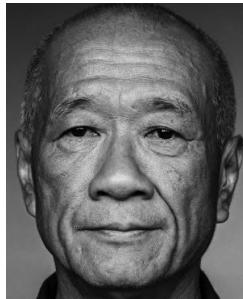
October - 2025

SUNDAY

05

After reading a biography of
Mark Twain by Ron Chernow

M arried Olivia Langdon
A uthor Extraordinaire
R enowned Orator
K ept chasing pipe dreams



Tehching Hsieh
[featured in a
recent NY Times
article about this
(non)performance
artist.]

MONDAY

06

T roubled relationships
W orld traveler
A ngelfish fixation
I credible Wit
N aive in business matters

Life is a life sentence; life is passing time; life is freethinking.

My work is like an empty can and the audience can fit inside their own life experiences.

Asked what he wants out of his final stretch of “life-time,” his response was at once simple and opaque, *To spend the time left*, he replied.

TUESDAY

07

WEDNESDAY

08

Courtney Martin brought this wise person to my attention:

- I tend not to think about readership. Instead, I think about a reader, the person I am trying to communicate with, but I don't have the idea that a lot of people are ever going to read anything.*
- I sometimes go months without writing, which is not something I used to do. I used to write every day. I still take a lot of notes, but I think I allow myself more time to be receptive to the world, as opposed to always worrying about saying something.*
- All I've been working on is napping, and maybe being kinder to others, to myself.*
- Sometimes, you have to look around at the life you've made and sort of nod at it, like someone moving their head up and down to the tune they like.*
- Annie Dillard once wrote, ‘How we spend our days is of course how we spend our lives. What we do with this hour and that one is what we are doing.’ I think about this a lot when I'm planning my day and what sort of pleasure I might suck out of its marrow during these tumultuous times of constant upheaval and war. Sometimes that means noticing even the most mundane of tasks in order to know we are alive, that we are living.*

FRIDAY

10

Ada Limón

SATURDAY

11

One of the objects quite dear to Marsha was an old storage trunk that had belonged to one of her grandfathers. How can I take this item and honor Marsha's memory by what I choose to keep as shared treasures? I will think about this family heirloom over the next few weeks. This idea stems from the chapter I am reading from Carla Fernandez's *Renegade Grief*.



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SUNDAY

12

As I recently scanned the NY Times, I read that Ashley Brilliant died on September 23rd. Here are a few of his witticisms that caught my attention.

- *Just when I nearly had the answer, I forgot the question.*
- *I didn't say it was your fault. I said I was going to blame it on you.*
- *Be kind to unkind people. They need it the most.*
- *My social life is much better, since I stopped spending it with other people.*
- *The best thing about being too late is that there's no more need to hurry.*
- *The surest way to learn is by doing it, but often, the lesson is: Don't do it!*
- *Not being able to do everything is no excuse for not doing everything you can.*
- *Sometimes the most urgent and vital thing you can possibly do is take a complete rest.*
- *For some strange reason, no matter where I go, the place is always called "here."*

MONDAY

13

TUESDAY

14

Below is a brief writing sample I contributed to my peers during an online writing assignment.

My Walk at the Lebanon Green

I look straight ahead as if walking on the tops of houses that crunch beneath my feet.

I breathe in and recognize new air going through my nose.
I breathe out and let the old air mix with the outside wind.

I meet the dog walkers and smile wondering what brought them out on their walk at the same time as I crossed their path.

I wonder if the Mariners will win tonight and if Fred* has a vested interest in the outcome.

The walk continues ...

* Fred is a participant in the writing workshop from Washington from where the Mariners baseball team hails.

WEDNESDAY

15

THURSDAY

16

Extraord I ary Care

M ary and Gene

P rovide for Mom & Dad

Count R ry Park

E xercising Each Day

Mary Prepared S uperb Meals and

S eamstress Duties, As Well

Mom's Brief Hosp I tal Stay for Fracture in Hip

H Onoring Mom & Dad's Presence

Co N versations With

S iblings & Relatives

T I me to Process

Mome N ts Without Marsha

Looki N g Forward to

Next Oc C asion to Visit

SATURDAY

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SUNDAY

19

MONDAY

20

• *I always say to people that my next adventure will be dying. Because either there's nothing, in which case, well, you don't care, do you? Or there's something. And if there's something – which I believe – then I can't think of a greater adventure than finding out what that something is.*

• *Each time I become depressed, I think about all the amazing stories of the courage, steadfastness and determination of those who are fighting the forces of evil. For yes, I do believe there is evil amongst us but how much more powerful and inspirational are the voices of those who stand up against it. (This quote was included in an acrostic puzzle I just completed.)* Jane Goodall

We have two lives, and the second begins when we realize we only have one. Confucius

We have two lives; the first one ended yesterday, and the second one begins today. ELP

TUESDAY

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• *Writers seek to create order out of the chaos of everyday life, and to extract meaning from both the tragic and the mundane.*

• *Our lives are shaped as much by those who leave us as they are by those who stay. Loss is our legacy. Insight is our gift. Memory is our guide.*

Hope Edelman

I take nothing and make more nothing from nothing ... it's just what I have to do. Grandma Prisbrey quote on an outlet for grief.

WEDNESDAY

22

I responded to a prompt as I participated in a writer's workshop sponsored by Duet from Phoenix, AZ. The facilitator suggested using "bed" as the theme. I remembered a favorite podcast from a few years back, *Everything Is Alive*, in which inanimate objects were given a voice and interviewed by a narrator. I chose **Her****Bert**, the **Hospital** **Bed** as the object I interviewed. My first draft follows on the next page.

THURSDAY

23

Take naps. Often new ideas come together when you are half asleep, but you have to train yourself to remember them. Jane Smiley

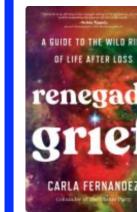
A nap in the morning is just about perfect! ELP

As we think of all those we have loved and still love, it is the eternalness of that love that brings them to this place at this time. Our remembrances do not detract from our joy but reinforce it.

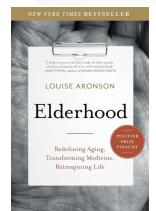
Nina Totenberg

FRIDAY

24



ADA LIMÓN
TWENTY-FOURTH POET LAUREATE
Startlement
New and Selected Poems



Current titles on my reading queue

Nothing is permanent. Nothing is absolute. And so in the search for value and purpose, the only insights of relevance, the only answers of significance, are those of our own making. In the end, during our brief moment in the sun, we are tasked with the noble charge of finding our own meaning. Brian Greene

History is not just a series of dates and events: it is the stories of real people and their impact on the world. Cokie Roberts

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WEDNESDAY

22

HerBert the Hospital Bed (as interviewed by My Person's caregiver)

What surprised you the most when you were assembled in our home?

I was given a place of honor in the living room where everyone could see me and see how important I was to provide My Person with support and comfort.

What's it like to hold a "dying person" with such a frail body?

I don't view My Person as a "dying person." They are a body who needs what I can provide them as they rest and participate in daily life with their loved ones. I feel privileged and honored to have been assigned this role of comfort and support. I live in the moment.

Were there some tense times between Your Person and her loved ones?

Yes, there were misunderstandings about how to respond to the reality within which My Person lived that differed from her loved ones' realities. But – when they saw the light and accepted My Person's new realities as their new realities, they got along splendidly.

Did you have any friends in Your Person's living room?

Yes, Mary, a sit-to-stand-recliner, was a constant presence and we know each other from the Medical Supply store where we both came from when Our Person entered hospice. We work as a team and Mary often lets me know what Our Person's support needs are after spending time with her during the day. Stan, my other good friend is a TV and he set such a pleasant atmosphere with a dash of light classical music in the background.

What is unique about you?

Well, I'm glad you asked that question. Unlike a stationary bed, I can bend my frame to enhance the posture of My Person as they rest or sit up depending on their needs. However, I can't press the controls that bend my frame. I must rely on My Person's loved ones to do that --- but I am always at the ready!

Do you communicate with Your Person?

We don't use words to communicate. I am present to be of support and serve both the physical and spiritual entities of My Person. I don't need praise for the diligence of my support. It's what I do, but extra-long sheets and a clean exterior are most welcomed!

Any final words?

Thank you for asking me these questions. We are often underappreciated.

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SUNDAY

26

MONDAY

27

TUESDAY

28

WEDNESDAY

29

THURSDAY

30

FRIDAY

31

- *Don't be afraid to be confused. Try to remain permanently confused. Anything is possible. Stay open, forever, so open it hurts, and then open up some more, until the day you die, world without end, amen.*
- *When I was young, I admired clever people. Now that I am old, I admire kind people.*
- *There's a vast underground network for goodness at work in this world – a web of people who've put reading at the center of their lives because they know from experience that reading makes them more expansive, generous people.*

George Saunders

A comment I posted on Courtney Martin's Newsletter sidetrack:

Thank you for introducing me to Nadia Bolz-Weber. One quote attributed to her is "church isn't perfect. It's practice." I would like to creatively swipe the essence of this quote to one that resonates with me: "Life isn't perfect. It's practice!" It was a delight to see and hear you during your recent writer's workshop.

• *Each time we look in the rearview mirror, we revisit the wisdom that's there for us, and it mirrors back our own transformation in the miles we've traveled. We've grown, and our relationship to the past shifts and deepens. We learn how to use our rearview mirror as a tool to navigate our loss; yet our gaze never fully rests there, lest we miss the exit on the road ahead. Because once we've spent time sitting with the histories and relationships and realizations of the past, it's time to tend to our grief in the present tense.* p. 79

• *The question "Where are you at with your loss right now?" is really an invitation to be present. It requires us to not only listen to other people, but to more thoughtfully listen to ourselves.* p. 82

• *Nature is chock-full of grief wisdom, protocols, and offers of support. For some, their deepest companion and counselor in grief is the ocean or bodies of water.* p. 133

Carla Fernandez

In replying to the question "Where am I with my grief right now?" I write the following:

I want to honor the mementoes that Marsha treasured and find a suitable place to house these items. I am currently thinking of the steamer chest that once belonged to her grandfather. The emotions of my grief surface when I relate personal reflections and poems I wrote while Marsha lived with dementia. I want to share my experiences as a way to honor Marsha as my teacher for how I can live the remaining days I have available.

October Delights

- 01: Mushroom Barley Soup is back at Whole Foods!
- 02: Even though the Red Sox lost their playoff series with the Yankees, it was still a delight to watch this final game of their excellent season.
- 03: Walking at Lebanon Green at a much slower pace
- 04: Participating in Speaker's Bureau online meeting
- 05: Listening to a podcast from 2020 when Krista Tippett interviewed Jane Goodall
- 06: Taking time to listen to Martin Carthy on YouTube – an early influence on Bob Dylan
- 07: Reading sections of *Renegade Grief* by Carla Fernandez
- 08: Online Support Group –LiveWell / 3:30 – 05:00 PM
- 09: Walking at Lebanon Green even when it was windy and quite cool

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October Delights (continued)

- 10: Natyra's presence and getting caught up on some mysteries on ACORN and PBS
- 11: Thanks to Natyra, I discovered a better way to cut up an apple.
- 12: Watching episodes of Marlow Murder Club with Natyra
- 13: Zoom call with Mary Fridley from Reimagining Dementia
- 14: Read article about Sue Goldie and her struggles with Parkinson's disease – NY Times
- 15: Writer's workshop for caregivers out of Phoenix, AZ
- 16: Finally feels like Fall!
- 17: Writing workshop with Courtney Martin
- 18: Maple Walnut Ice Cream!
- 19: Tout Fini for Three Pines jigsaw puzzle
- 20: Finished 1st draft of **HerBert** the Hospital Bed
- 21: Reading quotes by Edna St. Vincent Millay
- 22: Writing Workshop – sharing my brief essay: **Herbert** the Hospital Bed
- 23: Started 1st draft of second writing piece on the prompt “shoe”
- 24: 2nd draft of writing assignment in verse
- 25: Yo-Yo Brotherhood Gathering
- 26: Finding rocks with words and clear marbles for the “A” part of a tribute to MARSHA
- 27: 3-points in Final Jeopardy!
- 28: PSA results drop significantly to .13
- 29: Duet Writing Workshop – poem on the prompt of “shoe”
- 30: Blind guess correct on in-home Final Jeopardy
- 31: Wellness Exam – things are looking good

Recently I was intrigued by a poem presented in the *New York Times* to be memorized by the readers: *Recuerdo*. I wondered if Edna St. Vincent Millay, a fellow native of Maine, had any other pearls of wisdom to offer me today.

- *I am glad that I paid so little attention to good advice; had I abided by it I might have been saved from some of my most valuable mistakes.*
- *Life must go on; I forget why.*
- *Where you used to be, there is a hole in the world, which I find myself constantly walking around in the daytime, and falling in at night. I miss you like hell.*
- *Life isn't one thing after another, it's the same thing over and over.*
- *Night falls fast. Today is in the past.*
- *It may be said of me by Harper & Brothers, that although I reject their proposals, I welcome their advances.*
- *For the body at best Is a bundle of aches Longing for rest; It cries when it wakes.*

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Writing Using the Prompt “Shoe”

From my Calendar for October 24, 2025

*Every time we make a mindful step,
we are engaged in an act of enlightenment.
We can be enlightened about the fact that
we are making a step.*

Each step can have beauty in it. - Thich Nhat Hanh

While taking my steps on my walk today,
I wondered back on what this wise person had to say.
I listened to music around a Town Green quite near
“Diamonds on the Soles of Her Shoe” was playing in my ear:
A very appropriate tune for my writing theme
And I wondered what these lyrics could mean.

Let's take a brief look
At a story I read in a long-forgotten book
When just as a master composer did cease
Playing on the piano a beautiful piece,
His pupil asked, “That was beautiful, what does it mean?”
The composer sat back down and without causing a scene
Played it again.

Shoes are a lot like people.
They come in all shapes and sizes.
They exist to provide comfort and support.
They're not out to win any footwear prizes.
They have names and trusted brands.
They are like gloves we put on our hands.

My father may be 108 in just a short while
He has owned many shoes that have logged many a mile.
And just as a caregiver's shoes are hard to fill
They need to belong to a person with skill
In welcoming each day with challenges anew.
It really does take a village crew.

We all walk in the shoes of a person who cares
For the health and wellbeing of a person who dares
To want a life of comfort and who shares
Their own gifts of being and of presence
So that we can get to know their very essence.

Walk with me but take off your shoes
To a world of adventure and if you choose
We will learn more about our inner strengths
And be present and go to great lengths
To teach each other about loving and caring
And all about togetherness and sharing.

I noticed a pair of your shoes on the front doormat
And another pair in the hallway closet that
Had escaped the gathering of items for Goodwill
And they continue to remind me of your presence still.
These shoes remind me of messages you have left behind
Just for my wondering eyes to find.

SHOE is a cartoon strip I used to read
By Jeff MacNelly and I need
A quote to discover his secret for productivity
He says, “a deadline enhances my current creativity.”

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Writing Using the Prompt “Shoe” (continued)

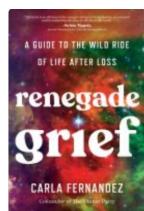
Life doesn't go quite as planned
Life has its own unique demands
That change and shift at unpredictable times
To add richness to my lines of rhyme.

What does Marsha's life mean to me?
The answer is not so simple to see.
How I continue in my lifelong journey
In perfecting what it means to be Ernie
Perhaps, my reply will become clearer
When my final days and hours come nearer.

I am going to seek a great perhaps.

François Rabelais

(as cited in *Looking for Alaska* by John Green)



Completed both of these books
during the last week in October

You report the best truth you know at the time. You can't do it for the ages. You know, you certainly always have that lofty ambition, but it's very hard to achieve it on a daily basis. But it has to be your ambition to do. And I think that's fair. Susan Stamberg

... I respond to reality in such a way that I look on existence as a great mystery and that at times, at certain moments, this mystery carries a strong charge. Tomas Tranströmer

The need to write comes from the need to make sense of one's life and discover one's usefulness. John Cheever

The holy things we need for healing and sustenance are almost always the same as the ordinary things right in front of us. Nadia Bolz-Weber

- *... we often miss the chance to really distill down the learnings, not just from someone's death, but from their life; and to honor the person or people, who were here before and who mattered.* p. 144
- *We can find sanctuaries not just in physical buildings, but in patterns of motion, not just in places but also states mind.* p. 147
- *Hope Edelman wrote a beautiful book called The AfterGrief where she describes a “phase we enter after the most acute elements of grief – shock, numbness, helplessness, sorrow, despair – start to subside. It’s where we reenter the larger flow of humanity, where we discover all the ways we’re still ourselves and also all the ways we’ve been fundamentally changed.”* p. 162
- *... you might very well ask, What is there to celebrate? To which I’d answer that you’re celebrating the person who was here, as well as the person you are becoming in this wild time.* p. 181
- *... by spending time with their objects or telling their story, and continue coming into presence, to not ignore the range of emotions related to your grief, but to get curious about what lessons it has to offer; the importance and privilege of resting, of listening to your dreams, of looking to nature, and finding the people who can be present with you too.* p. 185

Carla Fernandez