

# A Week in Images and Quotes

## January - 2026

- *I think when you think of death as being part of the life cycle and recognize that death is an inevitability for our species because the world has to be renewed with each death, then the hope becomes when it is renewed it will be renewed by people on whom I have had some influence for good.*
- *'Death with dignity' is our society's expression of the universal yearning to achieve a graceful triumph over the stark and often repugnant finality of life's last sputterings. But the fact is, death is not a confrontation. It is simply an event in the sequence of nature's ongoing rhythms.*
- *To become comfortable with uncertainty is one of the primary goals in the training of a physician.*

Sherwin Nulund

- *In the stillness of the quiet, if we listen, we can hear the whisper of the heart giving strength to weakness, courage to fear, hope to despair.*
- *Do not be silent; there is no limit to the power that may be released through you.*

Howard Thurman

- *Our heart wanders lost in the dark woods. Our dream wrestles in the castle of doubt. But there's music in us. Hope is pushed down but the angel flies up again taking us with her.*
- *WAKING AT NIGHT - The blue river is grey at morning and evening. There is twilight at dawn and dusk. I lie in the dark wondering if this quiet in me now is a beginning or an end.*
- *We think the fire eats the wood. We are wrong. The wood reaches out to the flame. The fire licks at what the wood harbors, and the wood gives itself away to that intimacy, the manner in which we and the world meet each new day.*
- *I believe that Icarus was not failing as he fell, but just coming to the end of his triumph.*
- *I'm vain enough to think that I've made a successful life. I've had everything I've ever wanted. You can't beat that.*
- *When I was walking in the mountains with the Japanese man and began to hear the water, he said, 'What is the sound of the waterfall?' 'Silence,' he finally told me.*

Jack Gilbert

THURSDAY

01

*I like to think of a new year being possible at any moment, as every moment is a kind of doorway.*

Joy Harjo

FRIDAY

02

*You can measure your worth by your dedication to your path, not by your success and failures.*

Elizabeth Gilbert

SATURDAY

03

*Something unknown is doing we don't know what.*

Sir Arthur Eddington's explanation of the universe.

One of the questions posed by Courtney Martin for an end-of-the-year reflection:

What did I learn about grief this year?

Grief has no timetable for its appearance.

It's not a series of steps of observance

But a process that reminds me of a loss

And the eventual price that it costs

When I deeply loved a person who is gone,

To whom earlier in life I was drawn

Because of her values and inner beauty she possessed

And she lives on in ways that can't be adequately expressed

But felt deeply as I continue on

To live my life . . . It's a new dawn. (ELP)

*Those endless closets and halls in the brain where the unknown hides; that open for a moment and then close again. That is where the poems come from.*

Ruth Stone

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SUNDAY

04

Elizabeth Gilbert, *Big Magic*

- *All I know for certain is that this is how I want to spend my life – collaborating to the best of my ability with forces of inspiration that I can neither see, nor prove, nor command, nor understand. It's a strange line of work, admittedly. I cannot think of a better way to pass my days.* p. 78
- *I can only be in charge of producing the work itself. That's a hard enough job. I refuse to take on additional jobs, such as trying to police what anybody thinks about my work once it leaves my desk.* p. 123
- *The essential ingredients for creativity remain exactly the same for everybody: courage, enchantment, permission, persistence, trust – and those elements are universally accessible.* p. 158
- *Do what you love to do, and do it with both seriousness and lightness. At least then you will know that you have tried and that – whatever the outcome – you have traveled a noble path.* p. 184

MONDAY

05

TUESDAY

06

- *The marvelous thing about a good question is that it shapes our identity as much by the asking as it does by the answering.*
- *Questions that have no right to go away are those that have to do with the person we are about to become; they are conversations that will happen with or without our conscious participation.*
- *The ultimate lesson is that there is no immunity, no matter our age or the size of our retirement account, from going through constant cycles of integration and disintegration in which we are humbled and hopefully set to rights with the world again.*

David Whyte

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*What you produce is not necessarily always sacred, I realized, just because you think it's sacred. What is sacred is the time that you spend working on the project, and what that time does to expand your imagination, and what that expanded imagination does to transform your life.* p. 232

WEDNESDAY

07

THURSDAY

08

- *When I lecture, under almost all circumstances, I write a new lecture for the occasion. It helps me think. It helps me make demands of myself that I would not otherwise make.*
- *The great truth that is too often forgotten is that it is in the nature of people to do good to one another.*
- *Memory can make a thing seem to have been much more than it was.*
- *It all means more than I can tell you. So you must not judge what I know by what I find words for.*

Marilynne Robinson



I completed reading this book and found that Gilbert validated my own orientation of creativity. She is a very refreshing author.

FRIDAY

09

SATURDAY

10

*Letting the facts speak for themselves is an immoral principle when we all know that facts and figures can be selected to prove anything.*

Peter Kavanagh

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*The real problem is what to do with the problem-solvers after the problems are solved.*

Gay Talese

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*We are linked by blood, and blood is memory without language.*  
Joyce Carol Oates

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## January - 2026

SUNDAY

11

- *Success is self-defined. You can choose what you think success is, and you can always change your mind.*
- *Happiness is not something you achieve. It's not something you do or some place you get to. Happiness is something you inhabit.*
- *It's easy to want the benefits of something; it's hard to want the cost.*
- *The first and perhaps most important thing to realize about being happier in life is to stop trying to be so happy in life.* Mark Manson



This photo surfaced on my phone while Nadya, Randy and Leo are at Disney World.

- *In solitude the mind gains strength and learns to lean upon itself.*
- *Sciences may be learned by rote, but wisdom not.*

Laurence Sterne

MONDAY

12

TUESDAY

13

When elders with dementia are met for the first time without our knowledge of their past life of achievements and struggles, all are viewed on a level playing field: valued for being in our presence for the essential “beings” who they are. There is a clean slate for our interactions with their current life. We focus on the now. This is mindfulness in one of its truest forms. ELP (This reflection is influenced by a posting by Courtney Martin when visiting her dad in a community where elders with dementia live.)

*Engaging each moment without reservation cuts through the illusion that things could be other than they are.* Rami Shapiro

*There's something about using your brain creatively that really elevates being alive.* Darlene Costello, NYTimes article, *A Man Who Shunned Cheap Sentiment Left a Gift for Others: Life*, December 25, 2025.

WEDNESDAY

14

THURSDAY

15

- *Everyone has a story, and I have learned that, at the core of it, most of our stories are more similar than not.*
- *I believe we learn what we are meant to learn, and some of us are simply meant to learn things the hard way.*
- *I spent many late nights during medical school using my brain to think about the brain and then using my mind to ponder the irony of it. How exactly do we separate and distinguish the mind from the brain?*
- *“Manifestation” should focus on bettering oneself and serving others, which gives meaning and purpose.*
- *Manifestation is about cultivating a fierce belief in possibility.*
- *Where I had once made a list of my material goals, I now made a new list of the ten things that open the heart: Compassion, Dignity, Equanimity, Forgiveness, Gratitude, Humility, Integrity, Justice, Kindness, and Love (CDEFGHIJKL).* James Doty

FRIDAY

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SATURDAY

17

*The only safe thing is to take a chance.*

Mike Nichols

*When you meet people, show real appreciation, then genuine curiosity.*

Martha Beck

*The same song on a different day was a different song.*

Bob Weir

A clue from my current acrostic puzzle:

*Sometimes it's the journey that teaches you a lot about your destination.*

Drake

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SUNDAY

18

MONDAY

19



I paused before this mural today before going into the building for my daily walk.

*As long as I'm learning something, I figure I'm OK – it's a decent day.*

Hunter S. Thompson

My Dad is 108 years old today!

What an honor to share this day with the celebration of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

Julian Barnes →

TUESDAY

20

WEDNESDAY

21

THURSDAY

22

*Sometimes the saddest passages of our lives are the most instructive. As hard as it is to watch a loved one drift away to another world where you can't follow, as much as the grief can feel overwhelming, dementia has important lessons to teach us all. One is not to take for granted that you understand what your loved one is feeling or absorbing. ... Another lesson is that we are all perfectly capable of stepping away from the sternness of our opinions and viewpoints, choosing instead to be calm, receptive, and gracious. ... I've told many people that, after the journey of dementia with a loved one, you won't be the same. How you change is a choice. You'll either be more open and more gracious or harder and more closed off.*

Patti Davis

- *You can define a net two ways, depending on your point of view. Normally, you would say it is a meshed instrument designed to catch fish. But you could, with no great injury to logic, reverse the image and define the net, as a jocular lexicographer once did: he called it a collection of holes tied together with string.*
- *Grief reconfigures time, its length, its texture, its function: one day means no more than the next, so why have they been picked out and given separate names?*
- *In life, every ending is just the start of another story.*

FRIDAY

23

SATURDAY

24

- *Intuition is the key to everything, in painting, filmmaking, business – everything. I think you could have an intellectual ability, but if you can sharpen your intuition, which they say is emotion and intellect joining together, then a knowingness occurs.*
- *I think that ideas exist outside of ourselves. I think somewhere, we're all connected off in some very abstract land. But somewhere between there and here ideas exist.*
- *It makes me uncomfortable to talk about meanings and things. It's better not to know so much about what things mean. Because the meaning, it's a very personal thing, and the meaning for me is different than the meaning for somebody else.*
- *I love Bob Dylan. Who doesn't? He tapped into some kind of vein and it keeps on keeping on. There's nobody like him. He's unique, and just ... way out cool.*

David Lynch

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## January - 2026

SUNDAY

25

- *Can anything be stupider than that a man has the right to kill me because he lives on the other side of a river and his ruler has a quarrel with mine, though I have not quarrelled with him?*
- *People are usually more convinced by reasons they discovered themselves than by those found by others.*
- *If we examine our thoughts, we shall find them always occupied with the past and the future.*
- *Do you wish people to think well of you? Don't speak well of yourself.*

Blaise Pascal

*Everything you want to be, you already are. You're simply on the path to discovering it.*

Alicia Keys

MONDAY

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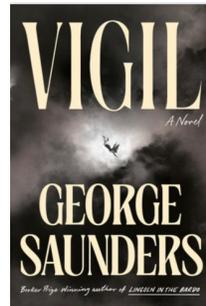
*I want to make a better record than I made the last time. I want to grow. I want to discover new things about myself creatively.*

John Legend

TUESDAY

27

I continue to meet, via zoom, with a support group of caregivers for loved ones who experience dementia. I find value in sharing information with people whose challenges mirror my own interactions with Marsha. I introduced myself as caregiver emeritus. I am now a caregiver of Marsha's legacy and to share the way in which I cared and supported her throughout her time with dementia. I am also a caregiver for my own aging to find the best supports for my continued emotional and physical well being in my advancing life story. I will continue to meet with this group for as long as members find my contributions to be of value. ELP



My most recent book that is on my reading queue.

WEDNESDAY

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THURSDAY

29

*If you ask yourself, "What's the best thing that happened today?" it actually forces a certain kind of cheerful retrospection that pulls up from the recent past things to write about that you wouldn't otherwise think about. If you ask yourself, "What happened today?" it's very likely that you're going to remember the worst thing, because you've had to deal with it – you've had to rush somewhere, or somebody said something mean to you – that's what you're going to remember. But if you ask what the best thing is, it's going to be some particular slant of light, or some wonderful expression somebody had or some particularly delicious salad.*

Nicholson Baker

*One such recent happening occurred this week after I vocally inputted my grocery list into my iPhone. When I arrived at the grocery store to look at my list I noticed *Life Surreal* . . . that it certainly is!*

FRIDAY

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SATURDAY

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*Enough of us see that we have a world to remake. We want to meet what is hard and hurting. We want to rise to what is beautiful and life-giving. We want to do that where we live, and we want to do it walking alongside others. We're asking, where to begin?*

Krista Tippett

Subscribed to Poetry Unbound – newsletter – Pádraig Ó Tuama

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### January Delights

1. Reflection on all the support Nadya and Natyra provided during their mom's illness with Dementia
2. Finishing final segments of American Revolution by Ken Burns et al.
3. Watching UConn Women's basketball game
4. Walking at Mansfield Community Center when I really didn't feel like it but glad I did.
5. Finished *Miss Scarlet* series on Britbox
6. The 12<sup>th</sup> day of Christmas passed peaceably, but I do miss Marsha!
7. Today's meal at Gina Marie's with George and Pat and Eileen Furey and Shirley Boron.
8. Watching second half of UConn Men's Basketball Game
9. Fredrik Backman's 4-minute speech at a bookseller's convention
10. Reading Parker Palmer's posting including a scratchboard etching of Taos Pueblo: Winter Returns
11. Women's UConn Basketball
12. Nice, relaxing cup of tea @ 05:00 PM
13. PSA results from blood work = .13 (normal range)
14. Problem solving time with Natyra when I could not send/receive text messages
15. Courtney Martin's interview with Rebekah Taussig
16. Completed watching *Light in the Hall* on Acorn
17. Speaker's Bureau - listened to 3 speakers
18. Made great progress on edits to two documents for blog: Path of the Perfecting Teacher and Dylan's Influence on my creative output
19. My Dad's 108<sup>th</sup> birthday!
20. Talking to Nadya - phone
21. Breakfast with George & Pat
22. Wonderful atmosphere walking at MCC - little noise from courts and only a few walkers - I could hear the music quite well.
23. Subscribed to Britbox premier and watched more episodes of *Shetland* and *GRACE*
24. Watched both UConn Men's and Women's basketball games
25. Warm and content as Winter Storm Benjamin dumps 14+ inches of snow in Columbia
26. Continued edits to document: The Path of the Perfecting Teacher
27. "Life Surreal" brought a chuckle when I saw this item on my grocery list - I had vocally inputted "Life Cereal" - but I like the outcome.
28. Ongoing interactions with LiveWell Caregiver Support Zoom
29. Used the term "caregiver emeritus" in framing my ongoing commitments to group called Empowering Partnerships Network
30. Continue to read *Vigil* by George Saunders
31. *Developing Our Hearts* - conversation panel offered through East Side Institute in NYC