

I have felt its approach in the back
of my mind, O Lord, like a
burden tilting toward me
across the calendar. I have felt its
long approach, and now it has arrived.

This is the day that marks
the anniversary of my loss,
and waking to it,
I must drink again
from the stream of a sorrow
that cannot be fully remedied
in this life.

O Christ, redeem this day.

I do not ask that these
lingerings of grief be erased,
but that the fingers of your grace
would work this memory as a baker
kneads a dough, till the leaven of
rising hope transforms it from within,
into a form holding now in that same
sorrow the surety of your presence,
so that when I look again at that loss,
I see you in the deepest gloom of it,
weeping with me,
even as I hear you whispering
that this is not the end, but only the still
grey of the dawn before the world begins.

And if that is so, then let that which broke me
upon this day in a past year,
now be seen as the beginning
of my remaking into a Christ-follower
more sympathetic,
more compassionate,
and more conscious
of my frailty and of my daily dependence
upon you; as one more invested in

A LITURGY FOR THE

Anniversary of a Loss

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the hope of the resurrection of the body
and the return of the King,
than ever I had been before.

Let this loss-hollowed day
arrive in years to come
as the kindling of a fire in my bones,
spurring me to seek in this short life
that which is eternal.
Let the past wound, and the memory of it,
push me to be present with you
in ways that I was not before.

Do not waste my greatest sorrows, O God,
but use them to teach me to live
in your presence—fully alive
to pain and joy and sorrow and hope—
in the places where my shattering
and your shaping meet.

Amen.