

BUILD A HOUSE FOR GRIEF

Build a house for grief
yours alone
tin roofed for
the company of rain
windows
open wide
for breathing
by a creek
at the edge of the wood
take your time

Build a house for grief
with a window seat
for watching
line it with old quilts
cover pillows with silk
hook up a clawed foot tub
place thick towels
near lavender soap

Build a house for grief
carry stones from the creek
for the hearth
stack the chimney slowly
mortar with memories
if you find a heart rock
place it tenderly
by the photo on the scarred table
keep one closet empty
lined with cedar
no one will hear you

Dig a garden for grief
let wild roses climb to the rafters
tuck bulbs into soil for later
spit plum stones from the porch
when the trees are tall enough
stretch a clothesline
wash the sheets give them to the
sky
to dance themselves dry

Make soup
sweep the kitchen
make the bed
grief will come home
kick off her shoes at the door
let herself in
(she has a key)

Welcome her
serve soup
stay up
too late
talking
draw a bath by moonlight
let her spend the night
she'll stay
as long as you need

--Pattymara Gourley