

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,

A LITURGY FOR THE  
**Anniversary**  
of a Loss

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THE LORD IS NEAR  
TO THE BROKENHEARTED  
AND SAVES THE CRUSHED  
IN SPIRIT.  
PSALM 34:18

more compassionate, and more conscious  
of my frailty and of my daily  
dependence upon you; as one more  
invested in 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.