

Grief, it is a thief.

It is a stealer of joy and peace.

It doesn't mind preying on insecurity.

It won't stop circling your brain.

It's always there to advocate for anxiety.

It never fails to bring up your last conversation, argument, or words.

Its best friends are "What could I have done?" "How could I have prevented this?"

And the all-encompassing "If only."

It breeds in hypothetical situations.

It never misses an opportunity to buddy up with regret and beat you down.

It comes in waves, and each one leaves you more exhausted than the last.

Grief is a complex creature, and no one deals with it in the same manner.

Getting mad doesn't help. Getting violent doesn't help. Getting drunk doesn't help.

Getting depressed won't help. Blaming others won't help. Nothing seems to help.

Grief is different from the inside than the outside. Grief from the outside feels powerless.

Grief from the inside feels broken. Grief is lonely, and although chances are that others are feeling grief, it's never as consuming as your own. Grief is selfish.

Grief doesn't stop being grief when someone says, "I'm so sorry for your loss," but it doesn't mean that they aren't sorry, so don't fault someone for not having the right words.

Remember, nothing helps.

Grief makes you question your beliefs, your values, and your loved ones.

Grief is a neverending journey. It goes through highs and lows.

At times, it's all-consuming. Other times, it's barely present.

When it reaches a fever pitch, it feels like an unstoppable force.

I don't have the answers to make it better. There's not a formula for healing.

I just know that in the ring of life, it is one of the toughest opponents that you'll ever face.

If I had to give insight to help someone heal, it would be don't be afraid to live.

Don't be afraid to laugh, and when you do, just know that it doesn't mean that you care less.

Don't be afraid to engage in conversation for fear of the grief bubbling to the surface.

Don't fear vulnerability. Don't fear the human condition.

Just don't be afraid. To laugh or cry or be angry.

Whatever you are feeling is your grief; you're the only one who can handle it.

-Keli Perry