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Temple Sinai of Roslyn  
Yizkor 2009

This poem is called The Bridge by Leopold Staff

I didn't believe,  
Standing on the bank of a river  
Which was wide and swift,  
That I would cross that bridge  
Plaited from thin, fragile reeds  
Fastened with bast.  
I walked delicately as a butterfly  
And heavily as an elephant,  
I walked surely as a dancer  
And wavered like a blind man.  
I didn't believe that I would cross that bridge,  
And now that I am standing on the other side,  
I don't believe I crossed it.

We come to Yiskor because we have been forced to step onto the bridge of grief. At this sacred hour some among us stand at the river's bank, just beginning the daunting march. Others are tentatively, step by step, making their way across.

Some days the pain weighs heavily. Others seem easier somehow, lighter, more forgiving and gentle. Grief is not a straight path; mourning knows no fixed schedule. And how could it be otherwise?

Once, we moved through life lifted by their laughter, and made strong by their love. Once, we awakened knowing that the sound of their voice would carry us through the day. Once, their embrace made any challenge, any pain, any fear seem so small. Friends and relatives stood by us, loving us, helping us in any way they could. And we were grateful to them, beyond words. Yet we learned quickly that no one could carry us over that bridge. Inevitably we all must travel across alone.

Each of us has had to learn to manage the loneliness. The void their strength and their love once filled. Each of us has had to learn that there will be good days and bad days and we often won't be able to predict what the dawn of daylight will bring.

The rabbis ask: When is it dark? When the moon and stars exit and the planets depart, there is no time that is darker. Yet at that moment, the Holy One raises up the dawn from the darkness to give light to the world.

So it is for all of us as we cross that bridge. The moment when the light of healing breaks forth midst the darkness, when memories soothe the heart and fill the empty places with warmth and gratitude. When remembrance comes without tears.

Some moment will trigger a memory, and a smile, and we allow ourselves joy and laughter again. The moment when we turn to look behind us, back across the river, surprised and grateful that we crossed that bridge. At shiva we never would have believed it. Yet it happens.

It cannot completely eliminate the grief, nothing can. Yet our faith does grant us an immeasurable gift: the knowledge that our loved

ones are protected by a compassionate God, beyond the moon and stars, for eternity, and that the light of the Holy One shines in the glow of our memories, granting us the strength to continue on, enabling us to again know the fullness of life's goodness.