

Standing Between The Living And The Dead

כָּל שְׁנַיִם עָשָׂר חֹדֶשׁ גּוֹפּוֹ קַיִם וְנִשְׁמָתוֹ עוֹלָה וְיורֶדֶת. לְאַחַר שְׁנַיִם
עָשָׂר חֹדֶשׁ הַגּוֹף בָּטֵל וְנִשְׁמָתוֹ עוֹלָה וְשׁוֹב אֵינָהּ יורֶדֶת.

For twelve months the body endures and the soul ascends and descends. After twelve months the body is no more and the soul ascends but descends no more.

(Shabbat 152a-b)

I needed to be alone so that he could come back. This was the beginning of my year of magical thinking...

Joan Didion, *A Year of Magical Thinking*, p. 33

Where is she now? That is, in what place is she at the present time. But if H. is not a body—and the body I loved is certainly no longer she—she is in no place at all... And ‘the present time’ is a date or point in our times... If the dead are not in time, or not in our sort of time, is there any clear difference, when we speak of them, between was and is and will be?

C.S. Lewis, *A Grief Observed*, p.35-6.

בְּזִמְן שְׁחֻבְרֵי הַחַיִּים עוֹזְבִים אֶת הַקֶּבֶר נוֹתֵן כָּל אֶחָד אֶבֶן קֶטְנָה עַל הַקֶּבֶר
וְאוֹמְרִים: פִּי אָנוּ מִבְּקָשִׁים מְחִילָה מֵאַתָּה אִם לֹא עָשִׂינוּ לְפִי כְבוֹדָךְ אֲבָל
עָשִׂינוּ כְּמִנְהַג הַמָּקוֹם. לֵךְ בְּשָׁלוֹם וְתַנּוּחַ בְּשָׁלוֹם וְתַעֲמוּד לְגוֹרְלֶךָ בְּקֶץ
הַיָּמִים.

When the members of the Chevre Kaddisha leave the grave, each one places a small stone on the grave and they all say: So-and-so son of so-and-so, we ask your forgiveness if we have not treated you with what you deem to be proper respect but we have followed the custom of this place. Go in peace, rest in peace, and rise to your destiny at the end of days.

(from *Gesher HaHayyim/The Bridge of Life*)