

Books 18Forty Recommends You Read About Loss



I Read This Over Shabbos is a weekly newsletter from Rivka Bennun Kay about Jewish book culture, book recommendations, and modern ideas. Receive this free newsletter every week in your inbox by subscribing [here](#). Questions, comments, or feedback? Email Rivka at Shabbosreads@18forty.org.

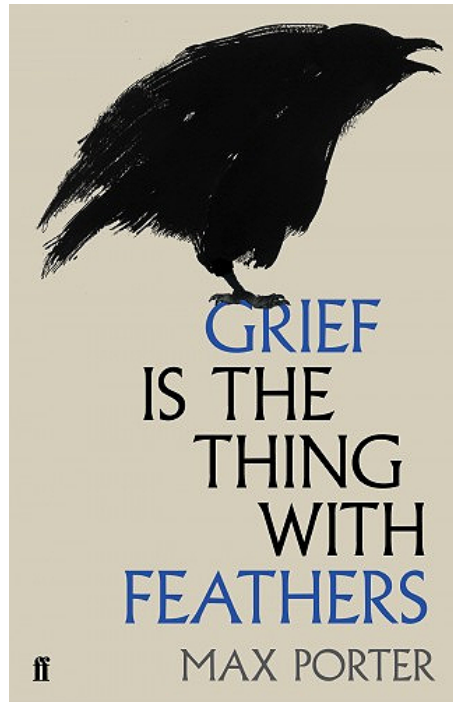
Grief manifests in many forms, but it is always unfathomable—and unavoidable. People grieve loved ones, communities grieve betrayals, nations grieve tragedies. Yet, each time we are shocked anew.

The booklist I compiled below addresses grief in its various forms, in an attempt to understand how we can process and heal. May this Tisha B'Av be one of *nechama*, and may we learn how to cope with our losses and heal ourselves—on every level.

On surreal mourning:

Grief is the Thing with Feathers by Max Porter

Blending fable, poetry, and raw emotion, this novella tells the story of a grieving family visited by a mythic crow who guides them through the surreal terrain of loss and healing.



On validating grief, not fixing it:

It's OK That You're Not OK by Megan Devine

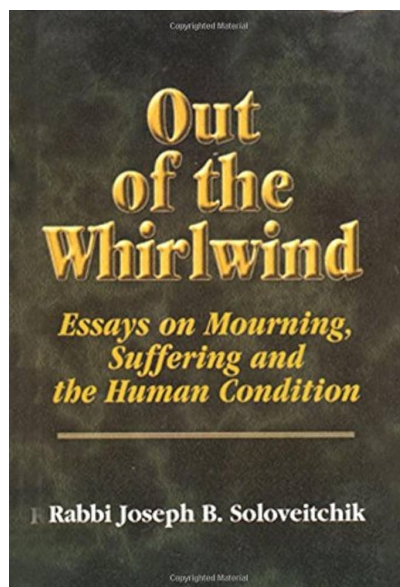
A compassionate and practical guide that challenges the cultural impulse to “fix” grief, encouraging readers to build a life alongside sorrow rather than seek to overcome it.



On sacred suffering:

Out of the Whirlwind by Rabbi Joseph B. Soloveitchik

Rav Soloveitchik offers a deeply rooted Jewish philosophy that intertwines halachic practice, emotional experience, and theological insight to illuminate both personal and communal grief.



On maternal grief and unspeakable loss:

An Exact Replica of a Figment of My Imagination by Elizabeth McCracken

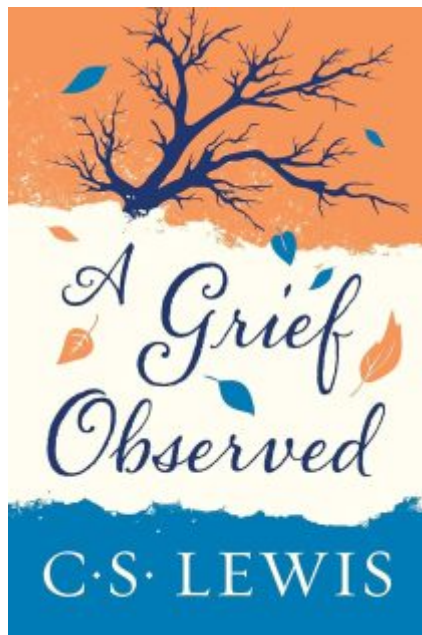
In this poignant and unsparing memoir that recounts the stillbirth of her first child, McCracken captures the paradox of overwhelming love and devastating loss.



On faith amidst loss:

A Grief Observed by C.S. Lewis

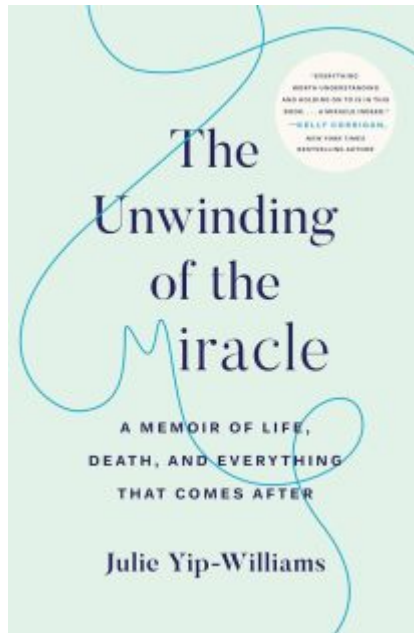
C.S. Lewis's raw and honest account of how profound loss shattered his faith and understanding of life, and how he slowly began to rebuild meaning in its aftermath.



On dying and defiant living:

The Unwinding of the Miracle by Julie Yip-Williams

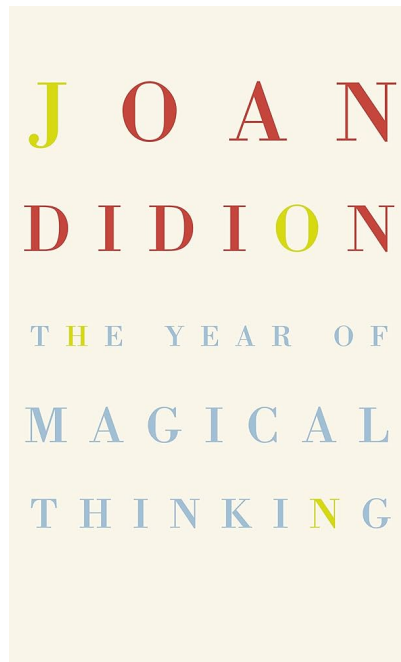
Facing a terminal diagnosis, Julie Yip-Williams wrote a fierce and luminous account of her extraordinary life, offering an unflinching, inspiring guide to living fully in the face of death.



On sudden loss:

The Year of Magical Thinking by Joan Didion

A raw and luminous memoir that captures with electric honesty the disorientation of grief and the unraveling of everything Didion once believed about love, memory, and sanity.



On ritual, solitude, and remembrance:

Memorial Days by Geraldine Brooks

Following her partner's sudden death, Geraldine Brooks journeys to a remote island to mourn, exploring global mourning traditions and seeking personal rituals to cope with grief and rebuild her life.

