



The Long Goodbye: A Memoir

By Meghan O'Rourke

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What is it like to mourn today, in a culture that has largely set aside rituals that acknowledge grief? After her mother died of cancer at the age of fifty-five, Meghan O'Rourke found that nothing had prepared her for the intensity of her sorrow. She began to create a record of her interior life as a mourner, trying to capture the paradox of grief—its monumental agony and microscopic intimacies—an endeavor that ultimately bloomed into a profound look at how caring for her mother during her illness changed and strengthened their bond. With lyricism and unswerving candor, *The Long Goodbye* captures the fleeting moments of joy that make up a life and the way memory can lead us out of the jagged darkness of loss. Effortlessly blending research and reflection, the personal and the universal, it is a love letter from a daughter to a mother that will touch any reader who has felt the powerful ties of familial love.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Starred Review. In this eloquent, somber memoir about the death of her mother and grieving aftermath, poet and journalist O'Rourke (Halflife) ponders the eternal human question: how do we live with the knowledge that we will one day die? O'Rourke's mother died of metastatic colorectal cancer on Christmas day 2008; the headmaster of a Westport, Conn., private school, she was only 55 years old, and left a stricken husband, two sons, and daughter O'Rourke, the eldest sibling. O'Rourke had shuttled back and forth from her life in Brooklyn and then job at Slate over the preceding year to care for her increasingly debilitated mother. The two were extremely close, and the shock of her mother's illness devastated the whole family (the author married her longtime boyfriend shortly after the Stage 4 diagnosis, then separated just as quickly). Over the last months, O'Rourke was bracing herself, "preparing" for her mother's death, by reading everything she could during the dizzying rounds of doctors' and hospital visits, until the family could take their mother home to die in a heavily medicated peace. Anxious by nature, secretive, often emotionally brittle, O'Rourke grew acutely sensitive to her mother's changing states over the last months, desperate for a sign of her mother's love to carry her through the months of bereavement. O'Rourke heals herself in this pensive, cerebral work, moving from intense anguish and nostalgia to finding solace in dreams, sex, and the comforting words of other authors. (Apr.)

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Review

"Meghan O'Rourke, a celebrated poet and critic, writes prose as if she was born to it first. Her memoir *The Long Goodbye* is emotionally acute, strikingly empathetic, thorough and unstinting intellectually, and of course elegantly wrought. But it's above all a useful book, for life—the good bits and the sad ones, too."

-Richard Ford

"Meghan O'Rourke has written a beautiful memoir about her loss of a truly irreplaceable mother—yes, it is sad, it is in fact heartrending, but it is many things more: courageous, inspiring, wonderfully intelligent and informed, and an intimate portrait of an American family as well."

-Joyce Carol Oates

"Meghan O'Rourke is an extraordinary writer, and she offers precious gifts to readers in this powerful memoir. There is the gift of entering her family, with its vibrant characters and culture. There is the gift of her profound insights into the experience of grief, its grip and the diverse ways we struggle to reenter a world where joy is felt. But most of all, there is her gift of showing us how love prevails after even the most devastating loss."

-Jerome Groopman, M.D., Recanati Professor, Harvard Medical School, and author of *The Anatomy of Hope* and *How Doctors Think*

About the Author

Meghan O'Rourke is the author of the poetry collections *Once* and *Halflife*. She is a cultural critic for *Slate*, and her essays and poems have appeared in *The New Yorker*, *The Nation*, and other publications. She lives in Brooklyn, New York.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Amanda Chatham:

Hey guys, do you really want to find a new book to study? Maybe the book with the title *The Long Goodbye: A Memoir* suitable to you? The book was written by a renowned writer in this era. The actual book, titled *The Long Goodbye: A Memoir*, is the main one of several books in which everyone reads now. This specific book has inspired a lot of people in the world. When you read this publication, you will enter a new way of measuring that you've never known just before. The author explained their concept in a simple way, thus all of us can easily understand the core of this reserve. This book will give you a lot of information about this world now. To help you to see the representation of the world with this book.

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Randy Champion:

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Joseph Wilds:

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