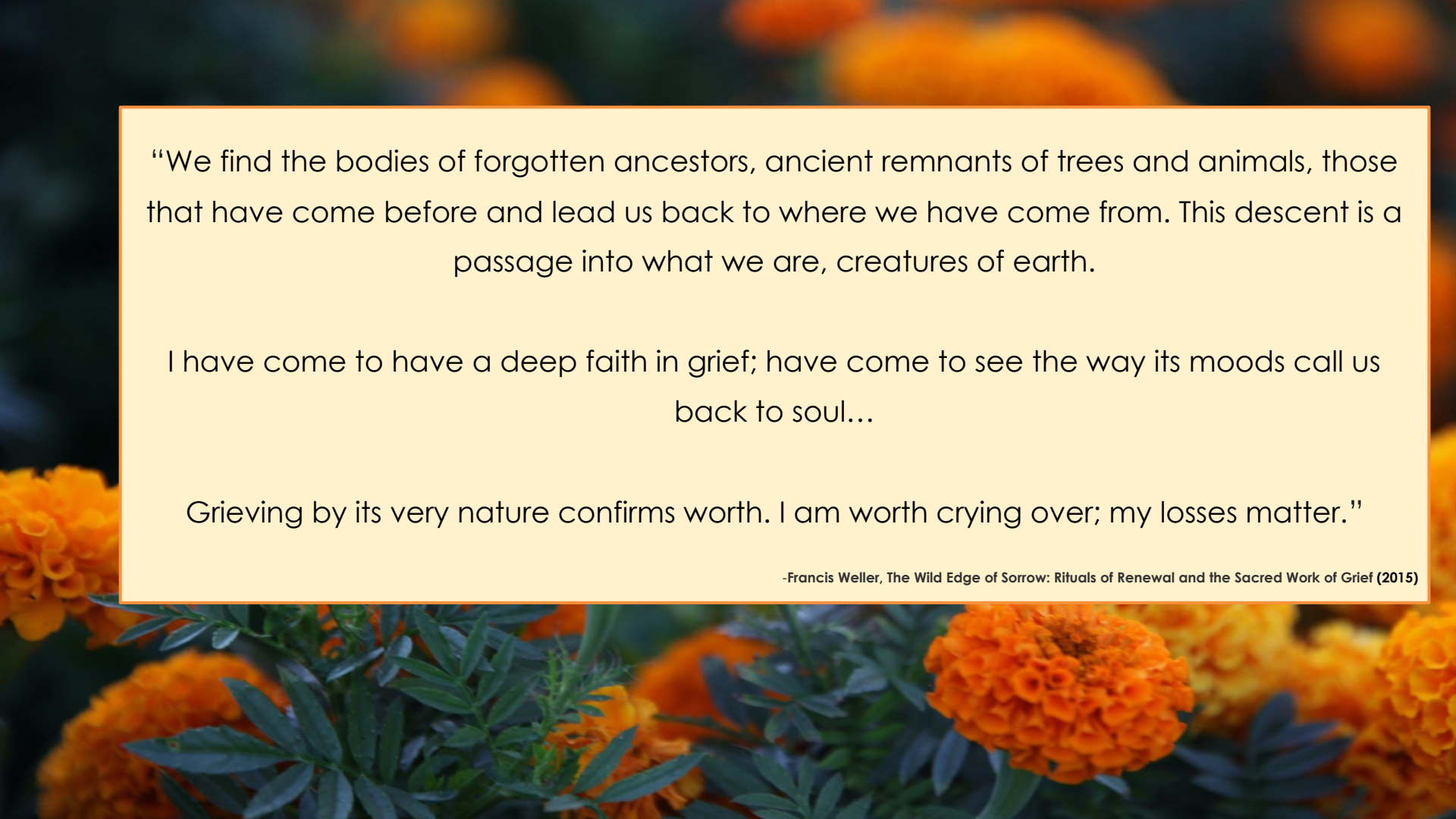


MOURNING IS THE WORK

Art and Ritual-Based Practices for Educators to
Metabolize Grief

Oriana Ides, MA. APCC. PPS





“We find the bodies of forgotten ancestors, ancient remnants of trees and animals, those that have come before and lead us back to where we have come from. This descent is a passage into what we are, creatures of earth.

I have come to have a deep faith in grief; have come to see the way its moods call us back to soul...

Grieving by its very nature confirms worth. I am worth crying over; my losses matter.”

-Francis Weller, *The Wild Edge of Sorrow: Rituals of Renewal and the Sacred Work of Grief* (2015)

GATE OF GRIEF: ANCESTRAL GRIEF

- Unacknowledged and untended sorrow of those who came before us
- Lost connection to land, language, imagination, rituals, songs, stories of their/our ancestors
- Sense of homelessness, orphaned between old and new worlds
- Experience of woundedness, loss and abandonment, where grief and shame are intermingled, residing in the psychic history of our lineage
- Collective soul grief of abuses of millions





PRACTICE:
Building an Ancestral Altar

**“My tongue a broken needle
scratching through the
grooves of lost wisdom**

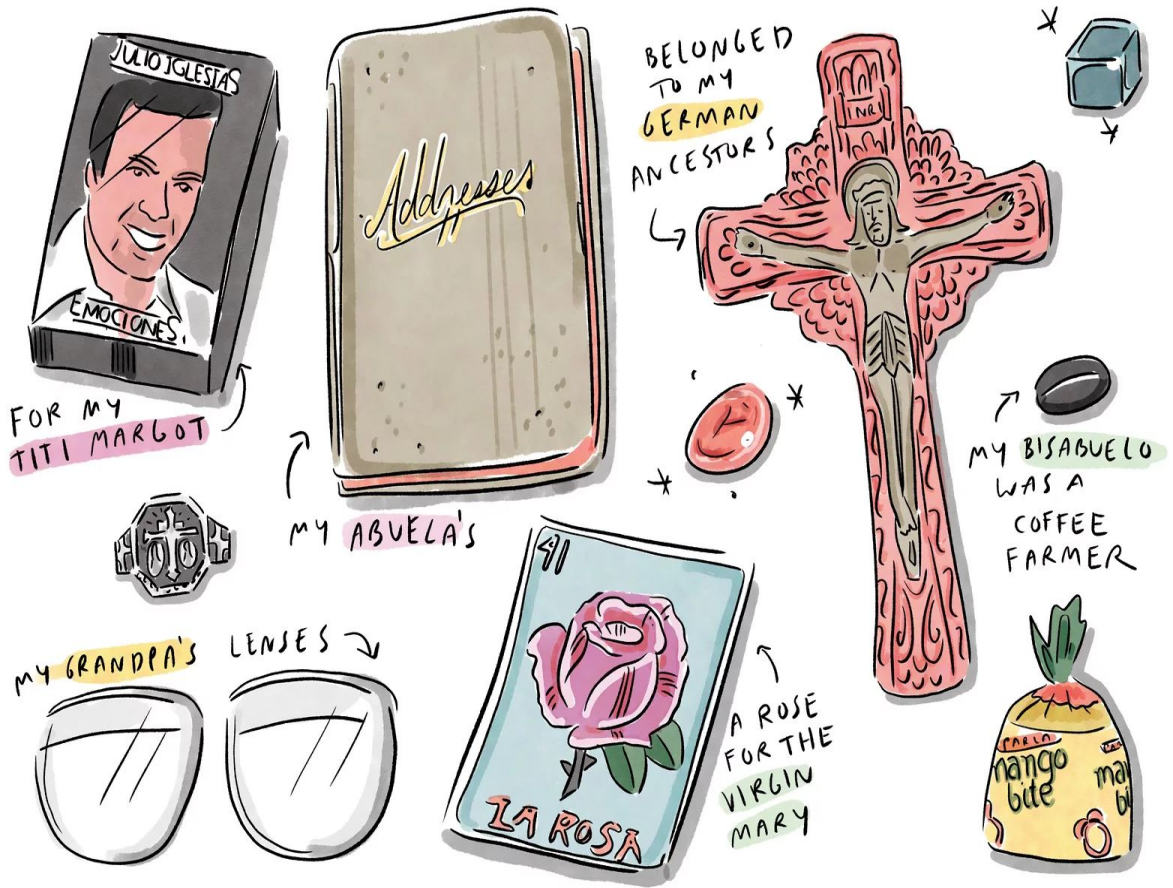
**trying to find a faith that
beats like yours**

**what secrets do your bones
hold?”**

- Myda del valle



“A Faith Like Yours” - Myda del valle



1

Find your why. Maybe you want to remember what your ancestors taught you. For Chelsey Luger, a member of the Lakota and Anishinaabe nations, it's the phrase:

MITAKUŦE
OYASIN.

It means "We are all related" in the Lakota language.

2

Gather objects for your altar. They embody our ancestors' energy and remind us of our loved ones.



3

Create a ritual. Do something to acknowledge that your ancestors are special to you.





Art by Lexx Valdez

“What felt different this time was the interior experience of the grief and despair. It was not centered on personal losses—my history, wounds, losses, failures, and disappointments.

It was arising from the greater pulse of the earth itself, winding its way through sidewalks and grocery lists, traffic snarls and utility bills. Somewhere in all the demands of modern life, the intimate link between earth and psyche was being re-established or, more accurately, remembered.

The conditioned fantasy of the segregated self was being dismantled, and I was being reunited, through the unexpected grace of fear, despair, and grief, with the body of the earth.”

— Francis Weller, *The Wild Edge of Sorrow: Rituals of Renewal and the Sacred Work of Grief*
(2015)