
IN TOUCH

Selva Aparicio

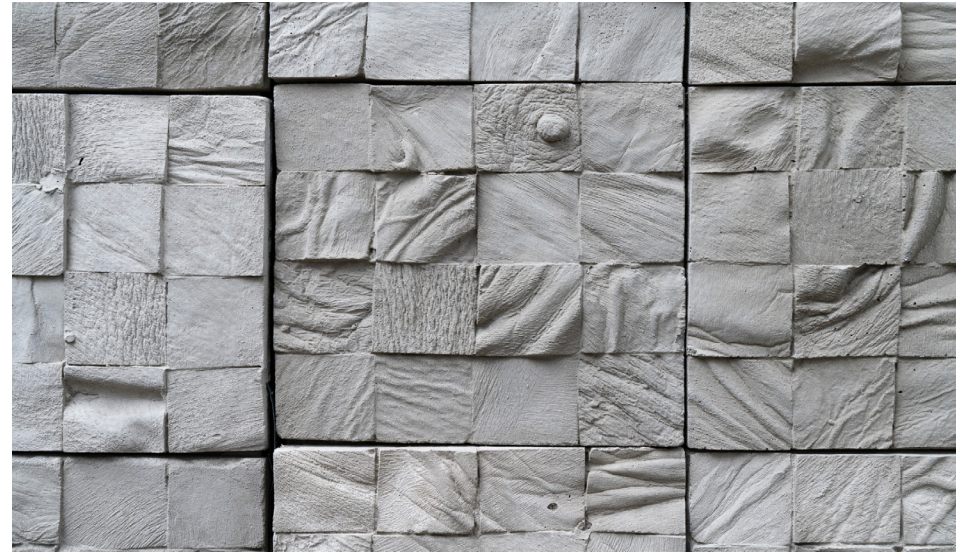
If you had one more chance to talk to a dead loved one, what would you say? Contribute to a book of letters to lost loved ones to help us feel more connected while thinking about death.

Ages 4+

We encourage adults and kids to create together

During the pandemic, we've all been thinking about death. Some of us have lost a loved one in isolation without being able to say goodbye. It can be scary and lonely to think about dying, but talking to each other about people who are gone and even writing to those people can help. Have you ever had someone you love die? If you had one more chance to talk to a dead loved one, what would you say? Artist Selva Aparicio is gathering letters to lost loved ones to bring together into a book to help us feel connected to one another while thinking about death.

Talking about death can make us feel sad. It can also be a chance to celebrate our love for other people and the important mark they've left on our lives. When someone we care about dies, they leave behind lots of things – memories, stories, objects, recipes, and beliefs – that continue to have an impact on the world. Death is the end of



Selva Aparicio. *Tejo (Hopscotch)* (detail), 2018, Steel, felt, and Portland cement casts from human dead donors. 2 x 192 x 48 in. Courtesy of the artist. Photo: Robert Chase Heishman.

someone's life, but not of our love for them or their impact on us.

Selva Aparicio makes art about memory, death, intimacy, and mourning, and she uses dead or discarded materials like cicada wings in her artwork. In order to make her artwork in *The Long Dream*, she took casts, or molds, of dead human bodies that were donated to research. When people die, we can choose to give our bodies to schools and hospitals so that other people can learn more about how human bodies work. The scientists and artists who study these bodies treat them with respect and care, even if they didn't know the people when they were living. Even after death, our bodies can continue to help other people. By using the remains of people and animals who have died, Selva's art helps us consider how living things are transformed by death, not erased.

Dear Friend,

I am inviting you to contribute to a book of writings for the dead. I hope that this most intimate publication will help us come together as we deal with grief.

The prompt is very open: Write a letter to someone who has died.

If you would like to have your writing included in this book, please complete the submission form on the next page and email it to tangible.care@gmail.com.

With care,
Selva

GETTING STARTED AND KEEPING GOING EVEN WHEN IT FEELS HARD

Begin by thinking of someone who has died. If you had one more chance to talk to them, what would you say? Is there something you didn't get to say while they were alive?

Is normal to feel stumped or nervous when starting. There is no right or wrong answer to this. For me, it makes it easier to start in the form of a letter: "Dear Grandma, it's been four months since you passed..." or by writing about a memory that transports me to them; "Josep, last time you came home, you played the piano for hours..."

Remember how you used to talk to that person. Write in the kind of language you would use when talking with them.

Be selfish. Even though you are writing to them, this is for you.

Write as much or as little as you like. If you want to share one word or one paragraph, one blank space, everything works.

Take time for this.

Don't judge anything you write in this letter and don't feel judged by the words that come out of yourself.

It's ok to share words of love or anger or frustration.

You might feel emotional, especially if the death of your loved one is recent. Give yourself credit. You're doing something challenging and special. To help myself navigate feelings and trust my instincts, I remember this quote by Rilke; "Let everything happen to you: beauty and terror. Just keep going. No feeling is final."

You are not alone. By doing this writing, you are contributing to something larger and every word counts. Just by writing your letter, you are connected to all those people. You are helping yourself and helping others deal with their own grief.

Take care of yourself. Thinking about death and being so generous as to share thoughts about it is not common in western culture. Once you are done writing, reward yourself. Drink a glass of fresh water, go for a long walk, congratulate yourself.

PUBLICATION SUBMISSION

If you would like your writing included in Selva's book, please complete this page and email it to tangible.care@gmail.com along with an image of your dead loved-one or an image of something that reminds you of them.

Feel free to email Selva at tangible.care@gmail.com with questions about the project.

By completing this page and emailing it to tangible.care@gmail.com, I agree to having my writing and image published in the upcoming book *In Touch* by Selva Aparicio.

YOUR NAME: _____

YOUR EMAIL: _____

I would like to be credited in the book

☐ Anonymously

☐ With my name: _____

WRITE YOUR LETTER HERE

If your letter doesn't fit in this box, please copy it into your email directly.