There is a watercolor I keep by the front door of our home, of a couple kissing. Rendered in just a few brushstrokes, it’s spare but so clearly a kiss that passion and sweetness just about lift off the canvas.

How beautiful this little watercolor is!

When I look at it, which is everyday, I think of my parents and the tradeoffs they managed so well—my mother making a home, my father building things, the two of them flying into each other’s arms when he returned from work each evening as if, married 20 years already, they had survived a war and discovered, miraculously, that the other was alive.

How they kissed, really kissed, in front of their sons. What a model of love that was. Every day I think of them and, often enough, talk with them. I mourn their deaths, as I do the deaths of friends and family.

_Yehi Ratzon milfaneecha_- May it be your will that I learn to accept grief as the price of love, to learn there is no loving without grieving.

_Yehi Ratzon milfaneecha_- May it be your will that I find in grief the surest sign I’m alive, I’m human—that I’m doing the work I ought to be doing by loving others enough to know that I will grieve, and grieve terribly, when they’re gone.

For in the end, we all go away. How terrible would a life without grief be, to have had no connection dear enough to ache for its loss!

_Yehi Ratzon milfaneecha_- May it be your will that we be spared such desolation. Give us grief, instead. Give us humanity and love and the pain of loss so that we may remember the mystery of life, of its coming and going.

I recall my parents, my friends, my family. I mourn them, and I thank them, and I try so hard to smile through my grief. For the ones we’ve loved have made our world, which we in turn make for others.

_Yehi Ratzon milfaneecha_- May it be your will that we live well enough and love well enough so that when it is our turn to leave, others will grieve for us.