Not everyone has gone through a divorce, but most of us have experienced lost love, broken relationship. Everyone knows someone who has divorced. The prompt is to write a poem about a divorce or a break-up—yours, someone else's, or that of an imagined character. Have your poem focus on things beyond the other person or the relationship itself. As in the poems below, focus on the ring or the event to acknowledge the end of love.

Wedding-Ring

My wedding ring lies in a basket as if at the bottom of a well. Nothing will come to fish it back up and onto my finger again.

It lies

among keys to abandoned houses, nails waiting to be needed and hammered into some wall, telephone numbers with no names attached, idle paperclips.

It can't be given away

for fear of bringing ill-luck.

It can't be sold

for the marriage was good in its own time, though that time is gone.

Could some artificer bear into it bright stones, transform it into a dazzling circlet no one could take for solemn betrothal or to make promises living will not let them keep? Change it into a simple gift I could give in friendship?

Denise Levertov in *Life in the Forest*

The End of Love

The end of love should be a big event. It should involve the hiring of a hall.

Why the hell not? It happens to us all. Why should it pass without acknowledgement?

Suits should be dry-cleaned, invitations sent. Whatever form it takes—a tiff, a brawl— The end of love should be a big event. It should involve the hiring of a hall.

Better than the unquestioning descent into the trap of silence, than the crawl From visible to hidden, door to wall.

Get the announcement made, the money spent. The end of love should be a big event. It should involve the hiring of a hall.

Sophie Hannah in *The Hero and the Girl Next Door*

Divorce

He has flown headfirst against the glass and now lies stunned on the stone patio, nothing moving but his quick beating heart. So you go to him, pick up his delicate body and hold him in the cupped palms of your hands. You have always known he was beautiful, but it's only now, in his stillness, in his vulnerability, that you see the miracle of his being, how so much life fits in so small a space. And you wait, keeping him warm against the unseasonable cold, trusting that when the time is right, when he has recovered both his strength and his sense of up and down, he will gather himself, flutter once or twice, and then rise, a streak of dazzling color against a slowly lifting sky.

> José Alcántara in "Rattle" Winter 2020

The Day Beauty Divorced Meaning

Their friends looked shocked—said *not possible*, said *how sad*. The trees carried on with their treeish lives— stately except when they shed their silly dandruff of birds. And the oceans did what oceans mostly do—suspended almost everything, dropped one small ship, or two. The day beauty divorced meaning, someone picked a flower, a fight, a flight. Someone got on a boat. A closet lost its suitcases. Someone was snowed in, someone else on. The sun went down and all it was, was night.

Leslie Harrison from *Displacement Poems*

Once two spoons in bed, now tined forks

across a granite table and the knives they have hired. Billy Collins in Ballistics

Loving

When we loved we didn't love right.

The mornings weren't funny and we lost too much sleep.

I wish we could do it all again with clown hats on.

Jane Stembridge anthologized in *Waltzing on Water:* Poetry by Women edited by Norma Fox Mazer and Marjorie Lewis