

ABOUT THE AUTHORS



PHOTO © ROWENA OTREMBE

Late August
It's as if we're always preparing
for something, the endless roll of the earth
ripening us.
Even on the most tranquil
late August afternoon when heavy heads
of phlox bow in the garden
and the hummingbird sits still for a moment
on a branch of an apple tree—
even on such a day,
evening approaches sooner
than yesterday, and we cannot help
noticing whole families of birds
arrive together in the enclosure,
young blue birds molted a misty grey,
colored through no will of their own
for a journey.

On such an evening
I ache for what I cannot keep—the birds,
the phlox, the late-flying bees—
though I would not forbid the frost,
even if I could. There will be more to love
and lose in what's to come and this too: desire
to see it clear before it's gone.

—MARY CHIVERS

CLAIRE WILLIS, a clinical social worker, lay chaplain and yoga teacher, has worked with end of life issues for over two decades. She is a co-founder of Facing Cancer Together in Newton, Massachusetts, adjunct faculty at Andover Newton Theological School, and former clinician on staff at The Wellness Community. She has a private practice in Brookline, Massachusetts.

MARNIE CRAWFORD SAMUELSON is a documentary photographer and a radio and multimedia producer. Her photographs are featured in *The Wild Braid*, a collaboration with poets Stanley Kunitz and Genine Lentine. She directs and photographs short films. Her website is www.bostonpicturegroup.com.

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LASTING WORDS



A Guide to Finding Meaning
Toward the Close of Life

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foreword by JOAN HALIFAX

photographs by

MARNIE CRAWFORD SAMUELSON

PRAISE for *Lasting Words*:

A Guide to Finding Meaning Toward the Close of Life



“Claire Willis lays out a path for people to find peace, connection, and meaning coming to the end of their lives.”

—SUSAN BLOCK, M.D., Chair, Department of Psychological Oncology and Palliative Care, Dana Farber Cancer Institute; Professor of Psychiatry and Medicine, Harvard Medical School

“*Lasting Words* offers us a delicately crafted guide, providing strong, secure scaffolding for the journey of living while dying, dying while living.”

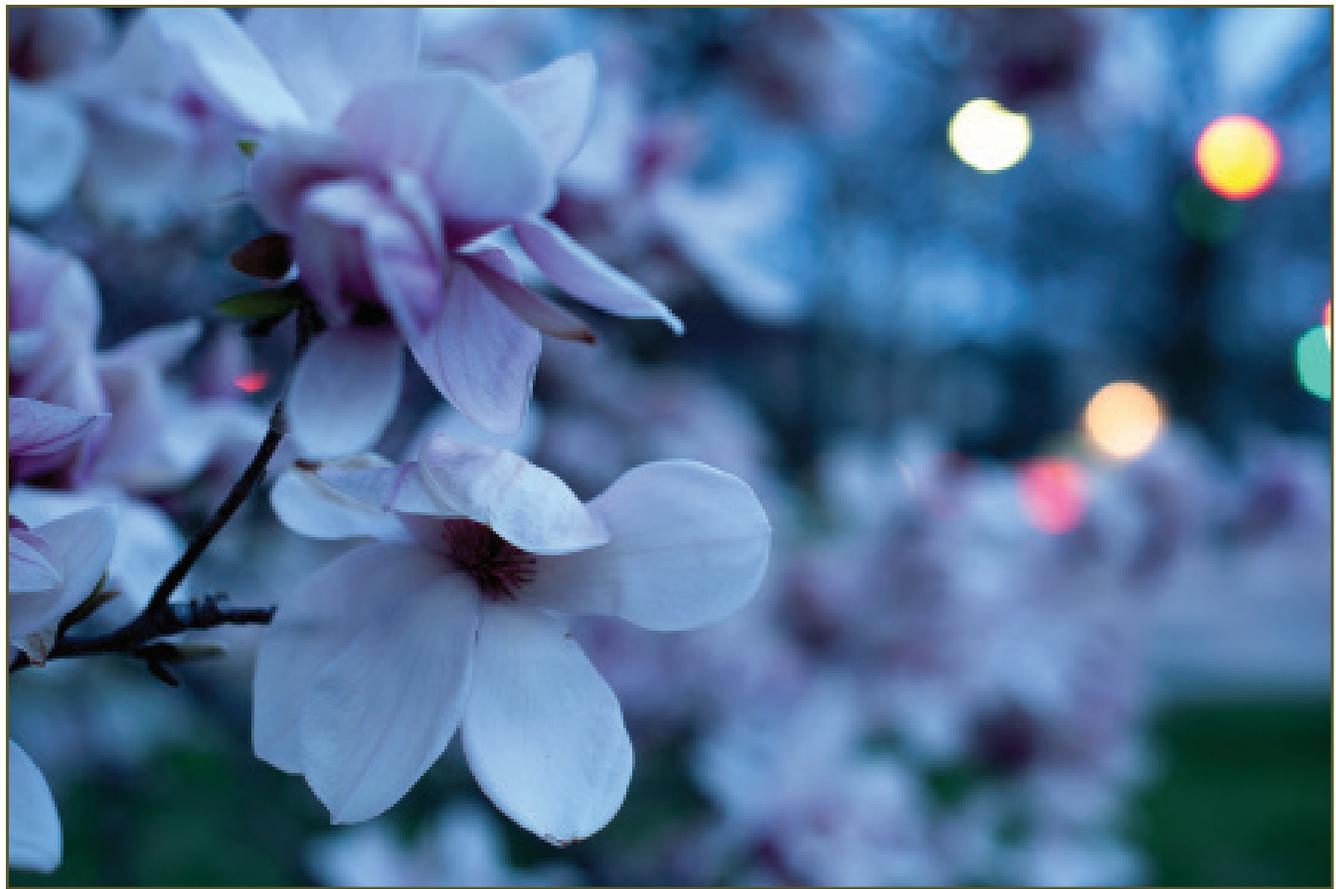
—REVEREND JULIA DUNBAR, M.Div.,
Director of Pastoral Care and Education,
Beth Israel Deaconess Medical Center

“This guide unfolds a path for bringing narrative, language and words to a world that is often met by muteness or distraction. Having such a guide as this is immensely valuable to all of us.”

—JOAN HALIFAX, author of *Being With Dying*



PAGE PHOTOS BY MARNIE CRAWFORD SAMUELSON



WHO will benefit from *Lasting Words*?

Lasting Words: A Guide to Finding Meaning Toward the Close of Life appeals to healthcare professionals, clergy, hospice workers and caregivers, partners, and families of loved ones who are dying. It is equally important to those in the latter parts of their lives who seek personal reflection and guidance.

Written words never matter more than they do at the end of life. Expressions of joy and sorrow, the desire to connect with loved ones, ways of finding comfort for yourself and strength for others—all are

vital when time is short. But perhaps most pressing is the search for meaning. Based on research and the author’s experience working with profoundly ill people, *Lasting Words* focuses on special end-of-life concerns. Claire Willis guides writers through their personal journeys to gratitude, hope, forgiveness, wisdom, prayer and, ultimately, saying goodbye. Filled with true stories, evocative photographs, tender poems and quotations, *Lasting Words* creates a living legacy for every person who uses it.