

We must care and be mindful of our lives, of those around us and the environment that we live in. Careful like you are when holding a candle.

Protect it from the wind, but don't smother it,  
Without access to oxygen it will go out.

Be careful to not burn yourself or others,  
But do not be afraid of it, for fire gives us warmth, hot food and industry.

Thanks to the miracle of life, strength can come from the most fragile of places and life can thrive in the most unlikely circumstances.

I like to think of ecosystems such as prairie and savanna, they are home to plant species, which *require* fire to germinate, establish, or to reproduce, and subsequently support the local animal life around them. Forest fires keep these places and those they are home to alive and thriving.

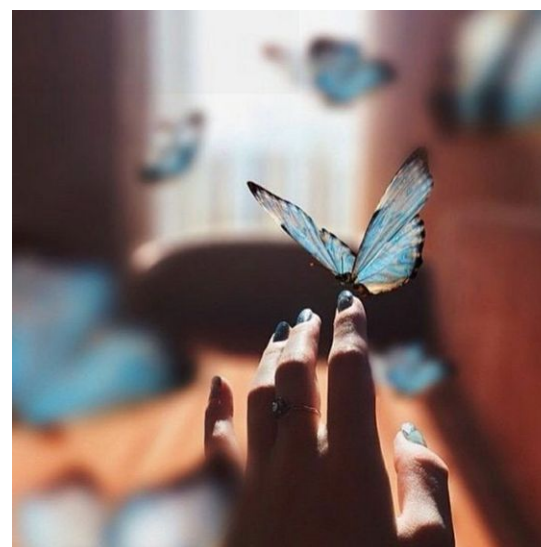
**Neil Gaiman, Fragile Things: Short Fictions and Wonders**

"It occurs to me that the peculiarity of most things we think of as fragile is how tough they truly are. There were tricks we did with eggs, as children, to show how they were, in reality, tiny load-bearing marble halls; while the beat of the wings of a butterfly in the right place, we are told, can create a hurricane across an ocean. Hearts may break, but hearts are the toughest of muscles, able to pump for a lifetime, seventy times a minute, and scarcely falter along the way. Even dreams, the most delicate and intangible of things, can prove remarkably difficult to kill."

**A closing prayer:**

**Psalm 39:4-7**

Show me, O Lord, my life's end and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting is my life. You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Each person's life is but a breath. Each human being is a mere phantom as they go to and fro: They bustle about, but only in vain; they heap up wealth, not knowing who will get it. "But now, Lord, what do I look for? My hope is in you.

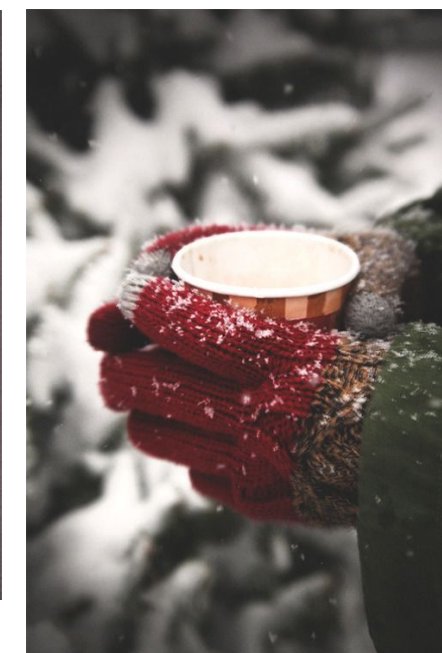
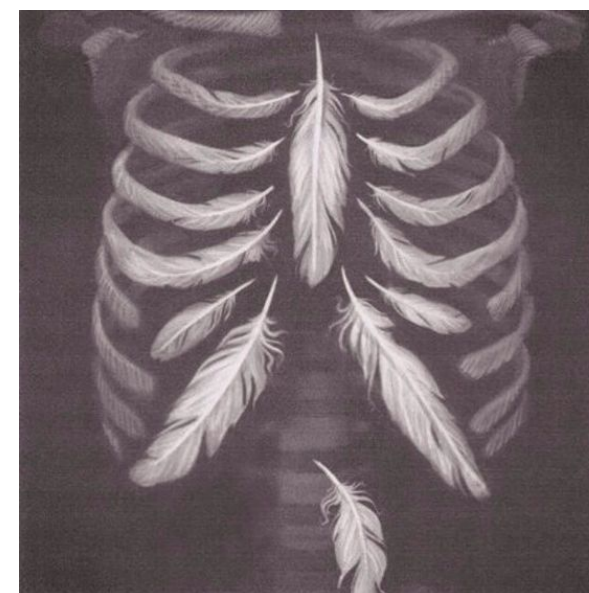
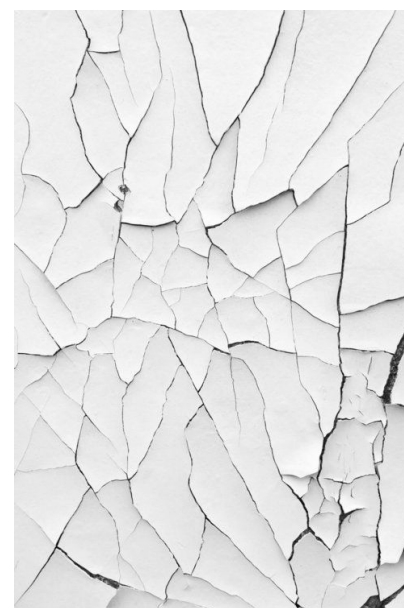


**This is a self-conducted service, everything you need is on this sheet,  
Find a space with your candle and take your time.**

We gather to reflect on the fragility of life and faith,  
During winter we can feel cold, isolated and lonely.  
This can be a time of despair or renewal.

The images and texts within this sheet have been collected to reflect our vulnerability, our fragile state. But also to inspire our capability for resilience and blossoming.

Take some time to reflect on the images and texts below and on page two. What has made you feel fragile? When have you felt vulnerable? Where have you found resilience? When have you found safety or comfort?



**Hermann Hesse**

“We must become so alone, so utterly alone, that we withdraw into our innermost self. It is a way of bitter suffering. But then our solitude is overcome, we are no longer alone, for we find that our innermost self is the spirit, that it is God, the indivisible. And suddenly we find ourselves in the midst of the world, yet undisturbed by its multiplicity, for our innermost soul we know ourselves to be one with all being.”

**Wendell Berry**

When despair grows in me  
and I wake in the night at the least sound  
in fear of what my life and my children's lives may be,  
I go and lie down where the wood drake  
rests in his beauty on the water, and the great heron feed  
I come into the peace of wild things  
who do not tax their lives with forethought  
of grief. I come into the presence of still water.  
And I feel above me the day-blind stars  
waiting for their light. For a time  
I rest in the grace of the world, and am free.

---

You have a candle as a reminder of the fragility of life,  
and the delicate balance it takes for God to hold us  
safely in their hand.

Our lives are fleeting and the world can be brutal and  
harsh.  
We can be like a candle flame in the wind.

Take this time to meditate over your candle,  
It's ephemerality in the world and the fragility of its  
existence in your hand.

---



Our winters are getting colder, the weather more extreme, these conditions cause great difficulty and risk to those that are most vulnerable in our community. We can see this through those who are homeless or in temporary accommodation, deaths in these communities have been rising.

This is not a pleasant reality to reflect upon, but it is a daily struggle for so many.  
Let's sit with the feelings stirred, meditate over the fragility of life around us.

**Threshold by R. S. THOMAS**

I emerge from the mind's  
cave into the worse darkness  
outside, where things pass and  
the Lord is in none of them.

I have heard the still, small voice  
and it was that of the bacteria  
demolishing my cosmos. I  
have lingered too long on

this threshold, but where can I go?  
To look back is to lose the soul  
I was leading upwards towards  
the light. To look forward? Ah,

what balance is needed at  
the edges of such an abyss.  
I am alone on the surface  
of a turning planet. What  
to do but, like Michelangelo's  
Adam, put my hand  
out into unknown space,  
hoping for the reciprocating touch?

Let us pray for those most vulnerable around us.

---

