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Life after Grief: An Astrological Guide to Dealing with Loss by Darrelyn Gunzburg, The Wessex Astrologer Ltd., P.O. Box 2751, Bournemouth BH5 2XZ, England, 2004. Paper—326 pp.—\$35 + shipping (£17.95) (ISBN 1902-405-145). Available from: www.wessexastrologer.com

Darrelyn Gunzburg's first astrology book is a lyrically written consideration of the subject of grief. The author has worked with clients on this most sensitive subject for 18 years; her book is designed for astrologers to help their clients to understand and work through the process of grief. While reading this book, I often became quite touched and found myself reflecting on my own life. There is a subtle secondary theme here that supports the author's statement: "In order to do the clearest work possible, the astrologer must first confront his or her own unique and intensely personal issues around loss and grief."

As a culture, we like to think of death as something remote. The author's unusual childhood experiences made death a familiar presence. Gunzburg was raised in an Orthodox Jewish community, and her parents were involved with a voluntary organization whose sole function was the care of the dead from the time of death until burial.

She writes: "Death walks towards us carrying Grief in her arms and Grief has to be honored immediately Death

arrives." The author cites statistics indicating that we will lose someone close to us through death once every 9–13 years. Since grief takes approximately five years to "unravel," this means that about 30 percent of the adult clients of a consulting astrologer will be engaged in this process at any given time.

The first chapter, *What Is Grief?* is an informative compilation of current thinking about grief from across various disciplines. Among the references here, the author includes the pioneering work of Elisabeth Kübler-Ross in working with the dying. Although death is the obvious end point of dying, Gunzburg makes the careful observation that "the end point of grief is life, to live again when one has been awakened to death and grief can do no more harm." She likens the process of grief to Chaos (and Complexity) Theory and includes the findings from current research into the complex biological and emotional responses to grief.

Astrology first enters the book as the author explores the parental signatures in the natal horoscope, especially the Moon, as an indicator of how behavioral needs come into play when we express grief. She presents case studies that show, in part, how the parents' reactions to a child's early losses (most often avoidance or suppression) can set the tone for the child's future experiences of loss.

One of Gunzburg's broad themes is that, if astrologers understand grief, we can help our clients at any age to deal with loss. The intricate astrology is clearly described — as the author demonstrates the primary astrological tools that she uses to track the process of grief throughout a life. She focuses on the planetary periods (the Fidaria of Medieval astrology), the Secondary Progressed Lunation cycle, and transits. In her synopsis of the astrological predictive tools that she uses, Gunzburg writes, "I have found Fidaria almost overwhelming in their ability to dominate, flavour and underpin all other predictive patterns." (The book includes Appendices describing Fidaria and the Progressed Lunation Cycle.) The stories ("Loss Histories") that Gunzburg offers, gathered from her research into individual stories of grief and loss, are recounted in each person's own words; these are life examples that demonstrate the cumulative effects and the sometimes powerful resolutions of unprocessed grief when it gets triggered again in later life.

Gunzburg also includes a chapter on the Centaurs (Chiron, Pholus, and Nessus) and speculates on how they can help us to understand the specifics and intensity of certain people's grief processes. There is an ephemeris for Chiron, Pholus, and Nessus from 1900 through 2050.

BOOK REVIEWS

continued

Darrelyn Gunzburg's other career as a playwright is reflected in her poetic writing. The many literary quotes and references and her vibrant telling of myths throughout add an artistic dimension and make the book as much a work of literature as a text on grief. This is not only an eloquent discourse on that most human experience of grief: It also suggests how astrology can play an active role in helping others to move through the time "when there is no fire in the grate and the pilot light is out."

— reviewed by Mary Plumb

LIFE AFTER GRIEF

AN ASTROLOGICAL GUIDE TO
DEALING WITH LOSS

By Darrelyn Gunzburg

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