

Martin G. Mayer

## You think you understand

You think you understand death  
Until it's your father, mother, sibling, or spouse  
You think you understand it  
Until it changes everything about your life

You think you understand it  
Until the time you feel you wasted saturates your mind  
You think you understand it  
Until it envelopes you, consumes you

You think you understand life  
Until you watch it be robbed from your loved one  
You think you understand it  
Until decades become months ... at best

You think you understand it  
Until every second becomes truly precious  
You think you understand it  
Until memories are all you have left

You think you understand suffering  
Until even the best palliation only goes so far  
You think you understand it  
Until the bad times outnumber the good

You think you understand it  
Until even a sleeping face is contorted by pain  
You think you understand it  
Until you remorsefully crave death's bittersweet reprieve

You think you understand grief  
Until fragmented sleep is your only release  
You think you understand it  
Until it makes waking up hard

You think you understand it  
Until normalcy is foreign, ephemeral, and guilt-ridden  
You think you understand it  
Until you lose your smile; it must now be feigned

You think you understand acceptance  
"Everything happens for a reason."  
You think you understand it  
Until your indignation seems indelible

You think you understand it  
"It'll make you stronger in the end."  
You think you understand it—  
But what if it just leaves you broken instead?

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