

**Responsive Reading by Heather Janules (adapted)**

**One:** They once dwelled among us, the people of memory

**Many:** They who knew us, they who taught us,  
They who hurt us, they who loved us.

**One:** They touch our lives time and again,  
through their presence and their absence.

**Many:** Through familiar scents and favorite songs,  
Through old stories and renewed sorrow.

**One:** As the earth turns and leaves fall,  
We reach back to renew the bonds between us.

**Many:** We hold onto love,  
Ever-stronger than death.

**One:** We reach back in gratitude and understanding—  
Without our time together, the pain and the joy,

**Many:** We would never be who we are today.

**One:** We remember those who have gone before.

**Many:** We honor the circle of life and death,  
And our place within this sacred thread.

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