



Good Grief: Pain, Pleasure, & Possibilities

Featured Artists:

Selasee Atiase

Ramon Gabrieloff-Parish

Pedro Senhorinha Silva

GOOD GRIEF: PAIN, PLEASURE, AND POSSIBILITIES

Event Intention

This is not a lecture.

This is not therapy.

This is not performance for performance's sake.

This is an invitation into the landscapes of grief and joy—and into the creative capacity required to hold them both at once.

Structure:

Conversation → Artistic Offering → Conversation → Artistic Offering → Conversation → Artistic Offering
→ Collective Creation → Reflection

Guiding Question:

How do human beings continue living, loving, laughing, creating, and becoming after loss of many kinds?

Social Media Policy

After considerable reflection, the artists decided that, because social media has become a part of our societies' communication landscape, we will only ask that if you choose to take pictures or video, that you do so respectfully and only toward the stage unless you have permission from the person being recorded.

Please tag any photos or images with #GoodGriefBoulder

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Artists Instagram

Selasee Atiase - @selasee_music

Ramon Gabrieloff-Parish - @crowcousin

Pedro Senhorinha Silva - @therooflesschurch

Learning Acknowledgement

We acknowledge that all learning in the United States of America is occurring in a context that has been shaped by colonization, immigration, and slavery. From the earliest days of this emerging nation, the experiences of Indigenous Peoples, enslaved Africans, and immigrants from around the world have played a central role in shaping the language, symbols, myths, and politics of this country. This history has created different perspectives, values, and cultural practices that continue to shape how different groups use and approach language, symbols, myths, and politics. We recognize that this complex history has both enriched and oppressed the diverse communities that make up this nation, and that it continues to impact the ways in which we learn, teach, and interact with one another. In our time together, may we strive to recognize and honor the histories, experiences, and contributions of all peoples, and work towards building a more just and equitable society where everyone feels at home.

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Good Grief: Relational Agreements

Pain, Pleasure, and Possibilities

For these two hours, we are creating a space where grief can be witnessed, explored, expressed, and transformed through creativity and community. We recognize that grief is not one thing, does not look one way, and does not move according to a schedule.

These agreements are invitations into the kind of community we hope to create together.

1. We do not judge grief.

Grief does not have to make sense to us for us to honor that it is real for someone else. People may grieve things we would celebrate, celebrate things we would grieve, or experience the same loss in completely different ways. For these two hours, we practice witnessing rather than judging.

2. We make room for the whole human experience.

Grief can contain sorrow, anger, relief, laughter, gratitude, confusion, resentment, tenderness, joy, numbness, and everything in between. There is no single correct way to grieve. We make room for the complexity.

3. Listen through, not just to.

Sometimes the words someone uses are not enough to fully communicate what they mean. Whenever we can, we listen through the words—to the experience, feeling, story, humanity, and longing underneath them. We do not have to completely understand someone to be present with them.

4. We don't have to fix one another.

Not everything shared in this space needs a response, solution, explanation, or lesson. Sometimes witnessing is enough. Silence is okay. Not having answers is okay. Living with the questions is okay.

5. Take care of yourself.

Something may arise for you tonight that cannot be resolved in these two hours—and that is okay. If you need to step outside, leave the theater, take a breath, call someone, seek support, or do whatever else you need to care for yourself, please do so. Your well-being matters more than staying in the room.

6. We are artists and creatives, not acute grief counselors.

We are offering creative practices, stories, music, poetry, conversation, and community as ways of engaging grief. This gathering is not a substitute for professional mental health or grief counseling. If what emerges for you requires more support than this space can provide, we encourage you to seek it.

7. There is no pass or fail.

There is no correct outcome for tonight. You do not have to feel better, experience a breakthrough, forgive anyone, let anything go, or transform your grief before you leave. We are offering an invitation—not an assignment.

8. There is no timeline.

Grief does not operate on a schedule. You are not behind. You are not doing it wrong. You do not have to be "over it." Transformation may happen quickly, slowly, repeatedly, or not in the way you expected. We honor your timing.

9. Draw the bigger circle.

When we encounter an experience that is difficult for us to understand, our invitation is to resist making the circle of belonging smaller. Instead, we practice the wisdom of Edwin Markham:

He drew a circle that shut me out—

Heretic, rebel, a thing to flout.

But Love and I had the wit to win:

We drew a circle that took him in!

We may disagree. We may be challenged. We may encounter grief that feels foreign to us. Whenever possible, we choose curiosity over exclusion and make the circle bigger.

10. We honor confidentiality and consent.

What people share here belongs to them. We do not assume that someone has given us permission to repeat, record, interpret, or publicly discuss their story simply because they shared it in this space. We also respect each person's right to decide how much they want to participate.

11. We trust creativity as an act of possibility.

We are here to explore what might become possible when grief meets creativity and community. We do not have to deny our pain to discover joy. We can allow creativity to become a way of moving *with* grief—to alchemize, express, reimagine, and create something new from what we have experienced.

12. Loving ourselves enough to try is enough.

There is no guarantee that grief will transform tonight. There is no requirement that we succeed. The invitation is simply to try—to bring what we can, receive what we can, and offer what we can.

Even when it is hard, our willingness to care for ourselves, care for one another, and remain open to possibility is itself an act of love.

We are not here to get grief "right."

We are here to meet it together.

Bios:



Ramon Gabrieloff-Parish is an Associate Professor and Chair of Interdisciplinary Studies at Naropa University, where he teaches courses in Afrofuturism, contemplative education, embodiment, environmental justice, conflict transformation, and collective liberation. A poet, storyteller, creative ceremonialist, and educator, Ramon explores how imagination, ritual, and culture can help communities navigate grief, transformation, and possibility. As co-founder of Once and Future Green, he bridges social justice, sustainability, the arts, and ancestral wisdom to cultivate more just and regenerative futures. <https://onceandfuturegreen.com/>



Selasee Atiase is a World Music/Reggae artist from Ghana. Counting Bob Marley and Nat King Cole as inspirations, his music approaches complex and often profound subjects with grace, simplicity and catchy melodies.

His song "Run" was featured on one of the world's best-selling video games, FIFA 2006. In 2006 he won the following awards:

"Run" won 1st prize for in the World Music category and 2nd in the People's Choice Award at the ISC (International Songwriting Competition).

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At the Billboard World Songwriting Competition, Selasee's song "Agba Yei" received an honorable mention. In early 2009, "Agba Yei" also won in The 8th Annual Independent Music Awards for Best World Fusion Song. In January 2011, Selasee was nominated in The 10th Annual Independent Music Awards for his song "Saidaway" in the World Beat Song category.[3]

And finally, Selasee was a finalist in the World Music category at the John Lennon Songwriting Contest, Session 1. <https://selaseemusic.com/>



Pedro Senhorinha Silva is a storyteller, writer, comedian, and cultural critic whose work explores freedom, identity, grief, joy, and the courage to live fully in a complicated world. Blending sharp insight with warmth and humor, he creates spaces where laughter becomes a doorway to healing, truth-telling, and deeper human connection. His creative work often bridges philosophy, spirituality, social reflection, and the everyday absurdities of modern life.

As the creator of the Liberation Comedy project, Pedro uses comedy as a practice of release—challenging fear, exposing contradiction, and inviting people back into their own aliveness. Whether through performance, conversation, or the written word, he brings an honest and deeply human presence that encourages audiences to laugh, reflect, and remember who they are.

<https://liberationcomedy.org> and <https://pedrosenhorinhasilva.substack.com/>

Resources:

[Boulder County Family Assistance Unit](#) - The Family Assistance Unit is a program in the Boulder County Coroner's Office that was established in 2022. Led by the Family Assistance Coordinator, the unit provides support services and resources to those who have lost a loved one due to a sudden or unexpected death.

[Center for African and African American Studies \(CAAAS\)](#) - The mission of the Center for African and African American Studies is to research, preserve, promote, interpret, and disseminate knowledge about the histories, cultures, and arts of Africa, African Americans, and the wider world of the African diaspora.

[NAMI Boulder County](#) - the **National Alliance on Mental Illness**, is the nation's largest grassroots mental health organization dedicated to building better lives for the millions of Americans affected by mental illness. **NAMI Boulder County's** mission is to provide **advocacy, education, support and public awareness** so that all individuals and families affected by mental illness can build better lives. **All programs are offered free of charge to all participants.**

[Renée Crown Wellness Institute](#) - The University of Colorado's seeks to promote the wellness of young people and the systems and adults who support them through interdisciplinary research-practice partnerships.

[Rocky Mountain Equality](#) - Out Boulder County is now Rocky Mountain Equality! The needs of the LGBTQ+ community don't stop at the borders of Boulder County, so why should our work? Over the last decade, we have prided ourselves on meeting LGBTQ+ people and communities where they are. We are excited to work collaboratively with the organizations already supporting the LGBTQ+ community across Colorado.

[TRU Community Care](#) - TRU offers [grief support](#) groups to meet the unique ways that people grieve. Each group is open to the community; **registration is required prior to first attendance for all groups.** Early registration is recommended as these groups fill quickly.

[YWCA Boulder County](#) - dedicated to eliminating racism, empowering women and promoting peace, justice, freedom and dignity for all.

Faith Communities:

[Unity Columbine Spiritual Center](#)

[First Congregational Church, UCC](#)

[Congregation Bonai Shalom](#)

[Islamic Center of Boulder](#)

[Second Baptist Church Boulder](#)

[Boulder Valley Unitarian Universalist Fellowship](#)

[Community UCC](#)

[Unity Boulder Spiritual Center](#)

[Pine Street Church](#)

[UCC Longmont](#)

[Unitarian Universalist Church of Boulder](#)

Recommended Readings:

[Witnessing Grief](#)

[The Denial of Death](#)

[Surviving the Death of a Sibling](#)

Selected Readings By Pedro:

[Good Grief: Pain, Pleasure, and Possibilities](#)

[Complaining as a Cry for Connection](#)

[We Were Created for Complete Joy](#)

[Distracted By Infinite Beauty](#)

[We Are Not Powerless](#)

[The Unknown's Guide to Knowing How Not to Know](#)

Marcus Freeman (Silva)
August 18, 1978 - December 23, 2025



Our Heartfelt Thanks

From all of us—Selasee Atiase, Ramon Gabrieloff-Parish, and Pedro Senhorinha Silva—thank you to everyone who helped make Good Grief: Pain, Pleasure, and Possibilities possible. We are deeply grateful to the library, our community partners, the organizations that supported this gathering, and every person who shared the event, sent a text, made a call, invited a friend, or simply showed up. It takes courage to willingly enter a space where we confront grief, especially in a society that so often asks us to push it away or sweep it under the rug. Your willingness to be present, to listen, to feel, and to explore the possibilities that grief invites made this gathering meaningful. As you continue your journey, we hope you surround yourself with community, beauty, art, and love. We hope you honor yourself, love yourself, and remember that your belonging is not in question. You are here because the entire universe said yes to you—and our hope is that you continue learning to say yes to yourself. Thank you for sharing this space, this moment, and this journey with us. We are honored to have grieved, imagined, laughed, loved, and explored what is possible with you.



GOOD GRIEF: PAIN, PLEASURE, AND...

You came into the room carrying something. Maybe you knew exactly what it was. Maybe you didn't have words for it yet. Maybe it was the grief of losing someone you loved, the ending of a relationship, a dream that didn't come true, a version of yourself you had to leave behind, or simply the accumulated weight of living in a world where so much remains unresolved. Whatever you carried, you were invited to bring it with you.

Good Grief: Pain, Pleasure, and Possibilities was an invitation to experience grief not as something to hide, overcome, or rush through, but as a deeply human expression of love. Through storytelling, poetry, comedy, music, reflection, and shared experience, we created a space where grief could be witnessed—and where the full range of what it means to be human could have room to breathe. You were invited to remember that grief and joy are not opposites. They are companions.

Perhaps you laughed when you expected to cry.

Perhaps you cried when you thought you were supposed to hold it together.

Perhaps someone else's story gave language to something you had never been able to name.

Perhaps you recognized yourself in a stranger.

And perhaps you discovered that grief does not have to be carried in isolation.

The hope was that you would leave with a deeper permission to feel—to grieve what has been lost, to honor what has mattered, and to make room for the love that remains. Most of all, we hoped you would leave knowing that your grief belongs in community.

Good Grief was ultimately an invitation to say yes to all of it: the pain, the pleasure, the beauty, the mess, the laughter, the tears, the memories, the uncertainty, and the possibilities. Because to be fully human is not to choose between grief and joy. It is to learn how to hold them together. And perhaps, in doing so, to discover that the very thing we thought would tear us apart might also be the thing that **BRINGS US BACK TO LOVE**