

Day of the Dead

by [Barbara Crooker](#) in the [October 28, 2015](#) issue

November 1st, the veil thinner, and we remember those who've gone to the other side. Don't worry, I say, I'll be there soon. But for now, I mark the presence of their absence, an ache in the throat, a finger on memory's pulse. Light candles to keep out the dark, to mark a path, should they wish to return. The floating world shimmers and ebbs. I'd like to cross over, just for one hour, see my mother, hold my baby, talk to Clare. Perched on our shoulders, the dead ride with us, teetering like pyramids of water skiers, forming enormous wings. Their words, though, remain inaudible. Cold syllables. They scratch maps in frost on dark windows, but no one can read them.

Cross the threshold. This night is ancient and long. Whisper in my ear, tell me what the new year will bring. Look at how the candle uses up its wax. See how the smoke rises in the hearth.