

About the authors of *Opening to Grief*
Claire B. Willis & Marnie Crawford Samuelson



Claire B. Willis, a clinical social worker, has been working in the fields of oncology and bereavement for more than twenty years. Her work and her life experience were the primary sources of inspiration for *Opening to Grief*.

A former staff member of The Wellness Community, a national organization, and cofounder of the Boston nonprofit Facing Cancer Together, Claire has led bereavement, end-of-life support, and therapeutic writing groups. She has co-taught Spiritual Resources for Healing the Mind, Body, and Soul at Andover Newton Theological School. Claire maintains a private practice in Brookline, Massachusetts.

Claire has worked in hospice care for many years, both as a volunteer and a social worker. As a lay Buddhist chaplain ordained by Joan Halifax at Upaya Zen Center in Santa Fe, she focuses on contemplative practices for end-of-life care. For the past five years, she has been a student of Koshin Paley Ellison, a founding teacher at the New York Zen Center for Contemplative Care. Claire is the author of *Lasting Words: A Guide to Finding Meaning Toward the Close of Life* (Green Writers Press, Brattleboro, Vermont, 2014). OpeningtoGrief.com



Marnie Crawford Samuelson is a documentary photographer, filmmaker, and storyteller. She is the principal photographer of two books—*The Wild Braid*, a collaboration with poet laureate Stanley Kunitz and poet Genine Lentine, published by W.W. Norton, and *Lasting Words* with Claire. Her photos have appeared in national and international magazines including *Newsweek*, *People*, *U.S. News & World Report*, and *Smithsonian*. She has shot and codirected several short films, including *Fire Station 88.1*, *Keeper* (First Runner-Up Audience Award nonfiction short, and Best of the Festival shorts Woods Hole Film Festival), *Inside Motherwell's Dumpster*, *Selina Trieff Will Not Stop* (Audience Award nonfiction short, Provincetown International Film Festival), and *By the Waters*.

Marnie maintains a daily meditation practice and is a member of the Sunday Sangha (led by Will Kabat-Zinn) in Berkeley, CA. She has a BA in political theory from Stanford and an MSc in business from the Sloan School at MIT. She lives in Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts, and Berkeley, California. BostonPictureGroup.com



Claire and Marnie have known each other since they were teenagers at summer camp. For years, Marnie was a regular in Claire's yoga classes for middle-aged and older women. When Marnie was diagnosed with cancer twenty years ago, Claire was there for her 24/7. They have buried parents and pets and recovered from divorces and breakups together.