



# A Shelter for Sadness

ANNE BOOTH & DAVID LITCHFIELD







Dedicated with thanks to Chris Chapman,  
who first introduced me to the writings of Etty Hillesum

AB

For Katie, Benny, George & Maggie

DL



Anne Booth was inspired to write this book by the words of Etty Hillesum,

a Jewish woman and victim of the Holocaust who wrote:

*"Give your sorrow all the space and shelter in yourself that is its due,  
for if everyone bears grief honestly and courageously, the sorrow that now fills the world will abate.  
But if you do instead reserve most of the space inside you for hatred and thoughts of revenge –  
from which new sorrows will be born for others – then sorrow will never cease in this world.  
And if you have given sorrow the space it demands, then you may truly say: life is beautiful and so rich."*

*Esther 'Etty' Hillesum (15 Jan 1914 – 30 Nov 1943)*

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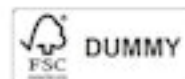
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# a Shelter for Sadness



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Sadness has come to live with me  
and I am building it a shelter.



I am building a shelter for my Sadness  
and welcoming it inside.





I am giving it a space  
for it to sit



or lie down.



To run around



or stand still.



To curl up very,  
very small,



or be as **big** as it can be.

To be **very,**  
**very** noisy,



or very,  
very quiet.



Or anything in between.



In this shelter for Sadness it can turn to the wall  
or look out through the window, in the middle of the night . . .



or in the day.  
The windows will open to let sounds in,  
or close to keep them out.





The shelter I will build  
for my Sadness  
will have light from the sun  
or from the moon and stars.

But the windows will have curtains  
that Sadness can draw when it wants to.  
And there will be candles or lamps  
if Sadness needs them.

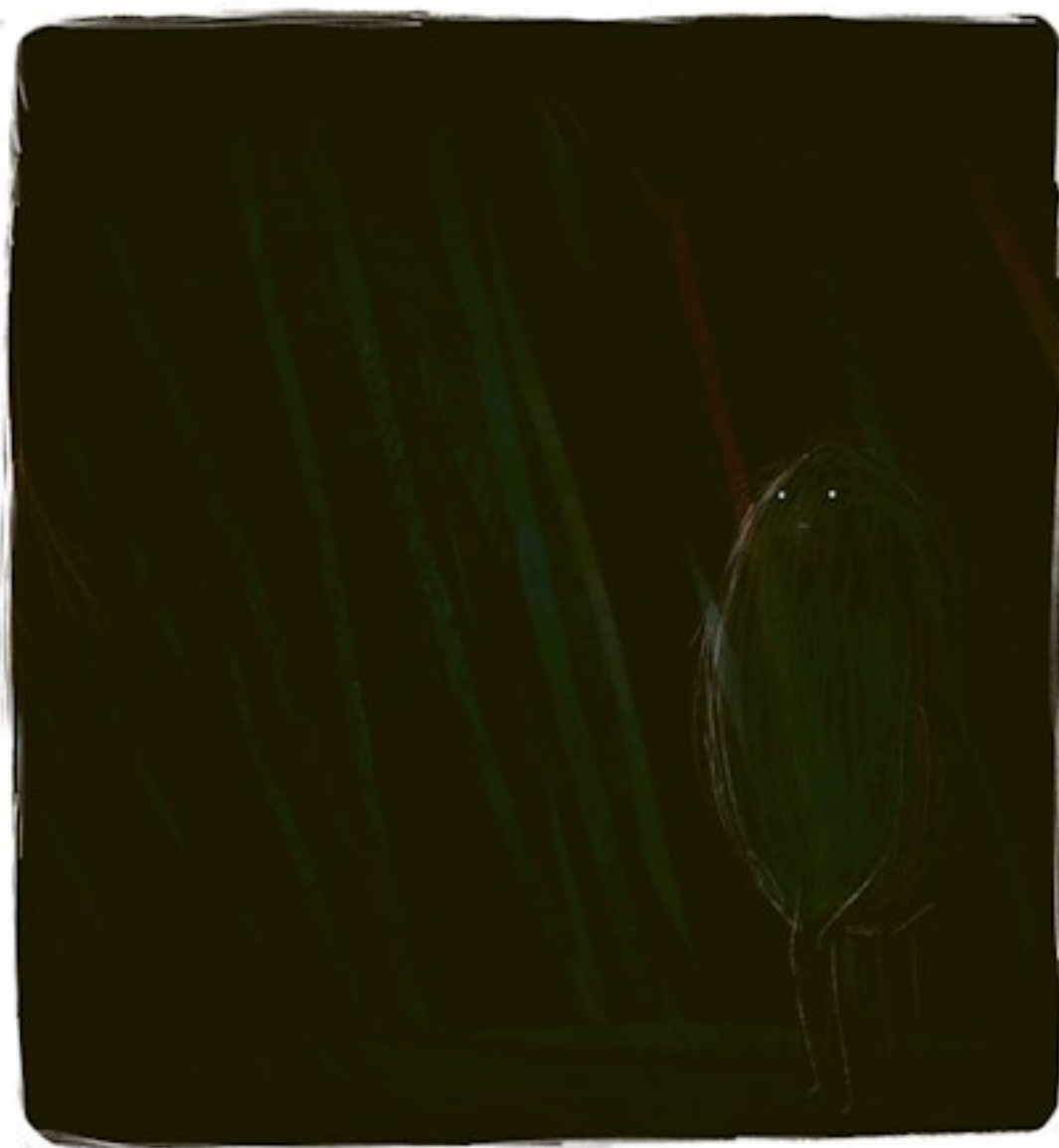






Lots and lots of light ...

or no light at all.



Sadness can sit in darkness if it wants to.  
Whatever it feels like.



Because this is the shelter for my Sadness,  
and it has a right to be there.  
And I will make my shelter strong, so that in winter  
Sadness will have a safe shelter against the storms.






But I will give it a little garden too,  
so that in spring, birds will come and build their nests  
and green shoots will peek through the dark earth.







In summer, roses will bloom,  
and their scent will steal in under the door.  
And my Sadness can open the windows  
and breathe in and smell them.

If it wants to.





In autumn it can look out at the trees,  
and cry when the leaves turn red and orange  
and fall to the ground.

Or it can go out and walk through the leaves  
and hear the sounds they make.



It can build bonfires and dance around them,  
or sit quietly and watch the flames.



Anything it needs to.







Sometimes I will visit my Sadness  
in its shelter every day.

Every hour if needed.





Sometimes we will run  
into each other's arms and hug and cry,  
and talk . . .



and sometimes just sit next to each other  
saying nothing.





Sometimes I will be too busy to visit Sadness for a while.

But that is okay too.

I have built a good shelter for my Sadness  
and it is safe inside, and nobody will hurt it.





I can visit it whenever I need to.

Whenever it calls to me.

And, whenever Sadness wants,  
it can come out of its shelter  
and hold my hand.





And we will look out at the world  
and discover how beautiful it is.  
**Together.**



