

Poems for Mom and Moose

In Attendance

The oxygen machine keeps the rhythm in the room.
Plunk, then a long hiss, regular as a tocking clock.
Her mouth gasps for air below caged eyes.
We count time between breaths, tapping thumbs to fingers.
One-two-three-four, another breath. We begin again.

Someone is swallowing sniffles.
Cell phones silenced, we whisper in this sacrosanct place
that used to be a living room.
I can't hear them across the bed. Over the plunk and hiss.
Plunk and hiss.

I think my hearing is going bad.
I stick my ear in her face and she recoils.
I'm sorry, I face to face her hoping to hear voice.
The plunk and hiss intrude.
Her throat rattles, lungs wheeze and weep.

Plunk.
And she forever stops trying, Hissss.
To say what she has said and forgotten
and doesn't need to say because we know.
Plunk and hiss.

Gurgling between rattles. She fights for air
and drowns in every breath.
Plunk and hiss. We count
on our fingers like children to 5 and 10
And she is silent.

Plunk and hisssss. Her head is hinged to her neck.
She gasps. We count and wait.
Plunk and hisssss. Plunk and hiss.
She gasps. We count and wait, Hold our breath.
Plunk and hisssss, plunk and hiss, plunk and hisssssssss

She gasps. We wait.
Her eyes and mouth freeze open to let her soul escape.
Machine unplugged.
We breath in the silence.
Until we

Break.

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What I took

(Pantoum)

I took her amber wedding pic.

I didn't take her mink.

I took the doilies that don't match.

I took a rosary I don't pray.

I didn't take her mink.

I'm keeping her diamond ring.

I took a rosary I don't pray.

I grabbed her leather gloves, too small.

I'm keeping her diamond ring.

I took two tiny dishes, painted roses red.

I grabbed her leather gloves, too small.

And stuffed her chenille quilt in my bag.

I took two tiny dishes, painted roses red.

I took the doilies that don't match

And stuffed her chenille quilt in my bag.

I took her amber wedding pic.

I took a rosary I don't pray.

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Over the Rainbow Bridge

By the pool with my Danes,
and my old Bull Mastiff
who refuses to cross
over the rainbow bridge
because he knows the
pot of gold is a lie.

So he hobbles
where he used to pounce.
Lets the squirrels get too close.
And sometimes he poops in the house.
The Danes give him shit
cause they know he's got old
And maybe they know I've gone soft.

His one eye's is bad, cuz he
didn't see the stick.
He looks like a submarine from above.
He thinks he can break
the no-begging rules.
Maybe he knows I've gone soft.

He sleeps a lot more,
But still wags his big tail.
And chews up his nails
to the quick.
I tell him to stop, but he pays me no mind.
Maybe he knows I've gone soft.

Each morning I check to see
if he's still here.
And sometimes he gives me a scare.
I get down on my knees
to watch his chest for a heave.
Maybe he knows I've gone soft.

But I secretly I hope the
Decision is his,
And he floats in the wind
past the clouds,
Chasing the birds like Garland did
Over the rainbow bridge.