

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Laurie Kuntz: Three Poems

Laurie Kuntz · Monday, February 10th, 2025

Away From Her

I want to remember my mother when she was still herself,
not in a grip of sorrows and congestions.
As death sits at her table, I am away from her,
now, the last questions can never be answered
no going back to mother and daughter
only on to the dealings with death.

Cummings said, *Dying is fine*,

but my mother is hooked up to a life gone stagnant,
there is only the waiting, but once gone,
and out of the aching descent,
I will easily remember a woman,
holding in her palms the lines
of all her children's futures.

As death eats at her table, I am away from her
picking huckleberries from trees rooted in my daily paths,
like a child I engage in pulling down the heavy berried limbs
carrying such sweetness, like a mother carries
the wishes and woes of her children.

When I should be near, I am far
picking huckleberries, their juices run
over my crescent fingertips and stain my skin —

stains that remain for days,
like the memory of my mother
when she was still herself.

*

Resting My Eyes

I would often find my mother splayed
on plastic slip covers in July
a wet rag over her crinkling brow.

As a child, I knew nothing
of what could ache a worried head.
I'd wake her for meals, for answers to questions:

Where are my sneakers,
the key to the bike shed,
spare change for the Good Humor Man,
the ring of bells, a more welcomed sound
than my tired mother on a couch taking uneven breaths.

Why are you asleep? It is daytime,
one of the many wakening questions.
I am just resting my eyes, she would say,

and now I know what a woman's eyes need rest from
tired chores, unflinching children
asking too many and so much,
bells that ring not with a sweet ending,
but a reminder of what else needs to be done.

Sometimes, all a woman wants
is to rest her wide and aching eyes
from the world that demands her constant gaze.

*

The Unveiling

The “unveiling” is a formal graveside ceremony marking one year of mourning.

We don't have to wait a year,
just until the ground is not frozen.

What remains frozen are memories,
the stone a permanent engraved label
of who she was:

*devoted wife, beloved mother,
proud grandma, great grandmother,
survived by many,*

yet her raspy whisper
of *my daughter*

is gone.

We now face our own lives,
once put on hold
for her survival.

When we unveil the stone, what do we really unveil?

The dead have no need for words,
nothing etched in granite
will make a difference.

As for the living,
we are as good as the last time we felt loved,
that is what we hold—not wanting to unveil
the lament we carry.

(Featured image from [Pexels](#))

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