

memories, a different person from everyone else. What I'm doing now is no one's business but my own. Not even yours.

The braking of wheels on gravel. I stop running, grab for the tag ends of dignity. A blue sports car, door open. "Come on, get in." A colleague of yours, someone we both like. He rescues me, as I believe you would have done, drives me to the right place as your surrogate, steers me to the edge of the crowd gathered under your canopy while a few more words are said and your coffin plunges into the earth.

Afterward, we talk about you.

It's not quite over, not yet, not this long day. I've finished with one funeral in time for another — a memorial service for a compassionate friend and fine novelist: Margaret Laurence, 1926 to 1987. Ironically, here I am to sit with the family. As I walk up the aisle, no longer needing to be invisible, I encounter a rope marking off the first four rows. Paralyzed, I stare at it, unable to breach one more barrier, feeling myself begin to faint. A friendly arm

reaches out, pulls me in. Now I can cry fully and freely — for Margaret, for you.

I believe the only way to overcome loss is to absorb the good qualities of that which is lost. Surely that is the meaning of the Eucharist: "This is my body, this is my blood." I look forward to the dubious blessing of old age with your gentleness smoothing my rough edges, with your voice still sweet and clear in my ear: "It's O.K., Little Friend. Now, try again."

BRONWYN WALLACE

Anniversary

(in memoriam, Pat Logan)

The road turns off
just where it always does and rising
comes out to the second corner
where the graveyard is.
Your grave. You. Behind us,
in one of those reforestation stands
the government plants, the pines
grow taller in their narrow columns
as if to show me how there can be order
in returning what we owe.
I remember what someone told me
of a woman whose husband took her ashes,
as she'd asked him to, and with their children
travelled for a year to scatter them
all over the world, a gesture
that tries to say what death allows
in each of us, no matter how we meet it.

It makes me want
to tell you everything:
what I ate for breakfast,
my son's French teacher's name,
how my basil's doing this year
or the deal I got on this Lincoln rocker
from an antique place I've just discovered
on the Wilmer Road. The man there — you'd like
him, Pat — who told me how he'd farmed
for years and years and then risked everything
on something else he loved,
his hands stroking a desk or chair
just as they've bumped the right curve
of a cow's belly, learning the season
of the calf within, listening to wood now,
what to bring forth
from layers of decisions made by strangers,
for their own good reasons.

Remember that day you taught me
how to look for four-leaf clovers?
"Don't try so hard," you kept saying,
"just peek from the corner of your eye,
like this," running your fingers
through a patch and coming up with one
every time, surprised as I was
and with no more faith, but opening
your hand out anyway, that gesture
which belongs to any gamble,
no matter how crazy, the movement
by which a life gets changed
for keeps, a reach
for what we only hope
is there

just as this yearly journey reaches
deeper into what I only thought
I understood: your death
is final, and touching that
brings out the colours — certain
as the grain in oak or cherry —
of a wider life that grows
through the small demands the present makes
pushing me back to the car for the ride home,
already planning the sandwich I'll get
at the truck stop on the highway; empty now,
the woman who runs it taking the time
to put her feet up, sink back
into the knowledge that will hold her
until I arrive; my wave, her smile
what we'll begin with, the common
courtesies, as if they were nothing
to be surprised by.