


ANN CARSON

What Child Comes Back

Sitting on a bench waiting, he watches her approach, arms empty now of flowers, his distant grave brighter in the late afternoon sun. Neither have words to say why they are here. They meet and walk away on new mown grass, through trees, past monuments, around the quieter inset stones, and the harsh newly turned mounds, some bearing testimony to that tender housekeeping.

They turn together, He, with an arm around her shoulders, head bending towards her hand as she reaches up to touch his cheek, to straighten the collar at his neck.

To wait, to tend, to walk and turn. To dig, to place a stone, to touch. To die at once, or piece by piece. We have no choice of memories.

Formerly a counselor and group leader at York University’s Counselling and Development Centre, Ann Carson also taught adult learning theory for adults returning to the university. Later, as a psychotherapist in private practice, she specialized in life-stage transitions, and in art as a healing process. Ann has recently put together Shadow’s Light, a collection of her early and new poems. Her prose essay, The Way We Live, to be published in 2006, highlights how family stories shape our lives while her current project is a collection of stories based on the invisibility of old age.