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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.