

TAKE HEART

A Conversation in Poetry

*Edited & Introduced by Wesley McNair,
Maine Poet Laureate*

In this week's poem, Ira Sadoff of Waterville departs from a rabbi's depiction of his mother in her eulogy, describing the mother he actually knew.

My Mother's Funeral

by Ira Sadoff

The rabbi doesn't say she was sly and peevish,
fragile and voracious, disheveled, voiceless and useless,
at the end of her very long rope. He never sat beside her
like a statue while radio voices called to her from God.
He doesn't say how she mamboed with her broom,
staggered, swayed, and sighed afternoons,
till we came from school to feel her. She never frightened *him*,
or bent to kiss him, sponged him with a fever, never held his hand,
bone-white, bolted doors, and shut the blinds. She never sent
roaches in a letter, he never saw her fall down stairs, dead sober.
He never watched her sweep and murmur, he never saw
spiderwebs she read as signs her life was over, long before
her frightened husband left, long before
they dropped her in a box, before her children turned
shyly from each other, since they never learned to pray.
If I must think of her, if I can spare her moment on the earth,
I'll say she was one of God's small sculptures,
polished to a glaze, one the wind blew off a shelf.

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