Lines for the Forgotten Familiar Living with Loss: My Spouse to Alzheimer’s

Dixie L. Partridge

Follow this and additional works at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq

Part of the Mormon Studies Commons, and the Religious Education Commons

Recommended Citation
Available at: https://scholarsarchive.byu.edu/byusq/vol63/iss2/13

This Poetry is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at BYU ScholarsArchive. It has been accepted for inclusion in BYU Studies Quarterly by an authorized editor of BYU ScholarsArchive. For more information, please contact ellen_amatangelo@byu.edu.
Lines for the Forgotten Familiar
Living with Loss: My Spouse to Alzheimer’s

Something is growing, changing alive, 
under the leaves of words. —Brewster Ghiselin

Tight as a bulb, I wait in the dark, 
wanting only the dark. But I’ve dreamed 
the scent of sage, the smell of plowed soil, 
a movement of wildflowers coming and going.

Another day moves in, feeling huge 
as granite cliffs above and down into lakewater. 
Living West all my years has seeded desires 
not yet poached away by trauma.

Not wanting the cessation of grief, exactly, 
I sit and watch light fill low unlit places. 
Not wanting words, I feel them try to surface 
when breeze slants blue timothy fields 
into rippling; come sudden with the hawk 
that dives like the blade of a knife.

Later through birch limbs, sunlight 
coats my arms—rather like an anointing . . .
I want to reach, to touch paper-thin peeling bark 
back to the tree-ness of their being.

With too easy conjectures of crickets, 
dusk rises finally from low ground. 
Over rock slopes, in fading spokes of sundown 
sand lilies close tight 
and open a thought—as though 
I’ve at last remembered: some beauty flourishes 
even when one’s own cannot.

— Dixie L. Partridge

This poem was a finalist in the 2024 BYU Studies Poetry Contest.