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The Day Dad Died

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Original Poetry

The Day Dad Died

Someone making coffee, lists,
phone calls.

Yesterday's completed crossword puzzle
beside library books marked in progress;
jars of crab apple jelly on the counter,
varied hues of first-time experimenting.

Garden gray in November bleak,
plants shrunken into earth, yet on
the anniversary rosebush, barren all summer,
two yellow blooms.

As they turned 80, my parents had moved 500 miles to live in a condominium near us. My father missed his wife of 55 years after my mother died of cancer, but he made a good life for himself. He spent much of the summer with his small garden of flowers and vegetables, learned more and more about cooking, and continued to read armloads of books. He mastered just enough on the computer to use e-mail and to prepare his memoirs, which he proudly distributed to his siblings and children. His proudest asset was his curiosity, which led him to listen engagingly to everyone he met.

When our family—hurriedly gathered from scattered directions—returned from the hospital where my Dad had just passed away, we sat in his home trying to hold onto everything of him.

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