
She finally stopped and took a breath. Looking up from her clipboard for the first time, she said to me, "Remember, you are giving her a gift."

Sometimes I question if the next four days actually ever happened. When you are waiting for someone you love to die, the passage of time becomes an unfamiliar thing. There is nothing more to hope for and nothing more to be done. All you can do is wait in the strange in-between. Between the desire to hold on and the readiness to let go. Between dread and anticipation. Between life and death.

I occupied myself with the tasks associated with my mom's care. I wanted to do a good job even though I knew that it would be of little consequence. I had a constant awareness that the worst and best that could happen were, strangely, the exact same thing and precisely what we were waiting for. I grew numb to the high numbers on the thermometer that once caused alarm. Changing compresses that turned warm minutes after being placed her forehead gave me a sense of purpose. I passed minutes by counting respirations, panicking anytime they exceed 26 or fell below 12. I never was able to control the fear that engulfed my whole body every time I approached the door to my mom's room. Every day, when a nurse visited I unsuccessfully fought the urge to ask the same question: How much time is left? I don't know if I asked out of fear or a need for assurance that this wouldn't last forever. Either way, there was never an answer.

The final moment, the one I had anticipated with dread and fear, was probably the easiest of the entire four-day period. It was just the two of us, and I knew, well before the second hand on the clock confirmed it, that it had been her last breath. There was no gasp or vision of spiritual ascension, but somehow, I knew. There was peace, for both of us. The days to follow would be tiresome and painful, just as the days before, but in that moment, all pain was gone.

I now understand that gift that the hospice nurse mentioned. Dying at home is not easy. It requires immense love and sacrifice. Love to overcome fear and dread. To open

the door each time despite not knowing what awaits on the other side, and to provide care when it is entirely hopeless. And sacrifice to surrender to the painful unknowns. To forgo happy final memories for ones of helplessness and confusion, and to bear witness to the entire progression of your own loss. But in the end, there is peace at home. And that peace is a gift, one we both give and receive.

IN LOVING MEMORY OF PATRICK GREGOREK



REMEMBERING HIM THROUGH WORDS

BY ALEXANDER GARDINER

As you know, Boston College has lost a dear member of our community. Last Sunday, March 24, God called Patrick Gregorek home. Pat was my friend and roommate. This has been the hardest week of my life but knowing Pat for 3 of his nearly 22 years has truly been a blessing. He was incredibly considerate and purposeful with the most gentle and loving soul. Whenever I would return from practice, he would unfailingly ask me how VIP is going, wondering about our songs and choreo, begging me reveal our secret Showdown

theme. Well, Pat, this year's theme is about love and family, supporting each other through the good times and the hard. It's about remembering our loved ones and knowing that even if they aren't with us anymore, they never leave us. And so tonight, I dance for you, Pat; VIP dedicates our set to you. I bet the seats are pretty good from Heaven, and I hope you enjoy the show.



BY ALEXANDRA MORAN

I met Pat the second day of our freshman year. I was immediately drawn to Pat and we became fast friends in our shared theology class, sitting next to each other and sticking together during class field trips. Pat would always ask the most thoughtful questions and I found his continual pondering of small and large things alike to be so fascinating. He had the best sense of humor and we'd often just make eye contact and start smiling. I have so many beautiful, joyful moments with Pat, of lunches and conversations, singing with him every Wednesday and Sunday with LAG, and just hanging out laughing. He was so loved by so many people. His

smile and kindness and curiosity touched so many. His presence in my life and especially in the LAG community will be so deeply missed. I'm struggling with this feeling of incompleteness, with sitting in rehearsal and in mass and knowing that it's not right or complete because Pat isn't there. But despite the grief and sadness, somehow I know that Pat is eternally with us. Pat will forever remain in my heart as one of the most beautiful friendships of my life.





CORDUROY, BLUE

MATTHEW DAVIS

In Memory of Patrick J. Gregorek

He always had a way.

Had a way to make you think.

He was so inquisitive
Always searching for answers
Seeking explanations
Not settling for anything less than truth.

He was so attentive
Listening to every note ring throughout the air
Reading every lyric as they fly across the room
Proving with his eyes that he cares.

He was so strong
Fighting a war without enlisting any soldiers
not wanting to spill anyone else's blood.

Had a way to stand out.

He was loud and proud.
Not caring if he may have been wrong
Standing tall in his navy blazer
Looking for no one else's approval.

He was funny in the most serious way.
Searching for a laugh both for and from him
Grinning from ear to ear
Spreading his smile like a disease.

He was so bright
Shining the path forward so others could see
in the darkness that he walked through.

He always had a way.

He still does.

He will find his answers and finally understand the truth.

He will sing along to every lyric hitting the perfect note.

He will put down his weapon and put on his jacket and
laugh and smile until we do again.

He is our light.

BY PROFESSOR AMY BOESKY, PHD

How does literature help us engage with loss? “About suffering, they were never wrong, the old masters,” W.H. Auden writes in a poem called “Musee des Beaux Arts,” noting the way artists capture both the obduracy of grief and its eruption in the ordinary, the day-to-day. Literature gives grief both outlet and shape. The traditional elegy, with its movement from lament to consolation, helped give expression to the “stages of grief” long before Elizabeth Kubler-Ross wrote her well-known book on that subject. To my mind, there is something about the shape and structure of elegy that is tremendously important to those of us who grieve the loss of a loved one. While “eulogy” lauds the attributes of the individual who has died, “elegy” has its deepest roots in song and ritual, in recognizing both the permanence of loss and what the poet Mary Jo Bang (You Were You Are Elegy) calls “the ineffable sense of continuance.” Scholars of medical humanities and narrative medicine recognize that these organizing frames help us both to remember and to heal. To give shape to loss in art or literature is a way of beginning to order what is profoundly disordering, a re-remembering that is intrinsically important as we resume our shared work of life.

BY PROFESSOR SARA MOORMAN, PHD

Three weeks after my baby brother’s college graduation, my grandma called my mom.

“I just wanted to let you know that I don’t feel well this morning, and I’m going to the hospital.”

Everything was wrong. Kidneys, lungs, cancer everywhere. Her doctor offered treatment.

“Thank you, doctor, but no.” And she was discharged to wait.

I had a trip planned to Scotland the next week.

“Go. I’ll be fine. GO!”

While I was gone, she stopped walking. Eating. Responding. But she breathed evenly.

Landed at Logan, called my mom. My mom entered the bedroom and said, “She’s back.”

By morning, my grandma had left.

Mary Rosenson Moorman, 1918-2012

BY PROFESSOR ANNE ELEZABETH PLUTO, PhD

Poetry has always been a force in my life. An echo, a special way to count time, a memory recorder. Before I started first grade my father bought me my first poetry book. He was a man who loved words and could joke in the several languages he spoke. He was man of abundant imagination and perspective. He died at the age of 91 from painful cancer – that had miraculously disappeared for 17 years; my mother – his deep love – died 8 years later at the age of 92. My response to the events of their illnesses and deaths was to write a series of poems which later became a book : Benign Protection (Cervena Barva Press – 2016). The writing process gave space for memory and grief. I would surround myself with talismans – small things that belonged to them, as if to call their ghosts back to me, to feel what I had lost, to let them know they were loved and missed.

I have been to Samarqand

For my father

Two years ago
May now as you made yourself
ready for death I wanted to
remain, relieve her of her duty
and be a good daughter.
You sent me home
to die with her
alone.

I have been to Samarqand
that final time
a journey by water
the dream geography more full

than life, the mosque, the church
the covered women singing
the Stations of the Cross
the goblin boat to take me back
by morning
I travel by train, north and walk
to the park, it's hot and burning
to see the icons at the Met
to look into the eyes of each
and every opalescent Virgin
in the house of the father
she guides the souls in comfort to Samarra.
Her eyes
follow me, at home

I present you a gift
war traveler
who prayed
at every house of the father
St. Sophia's in Kiev,
the Friday Mosque of Tashkent,
the Bucharian Synagogue on Sepyornaya Street
the tomb of the Prophet Daniel where his stolen
bones grow the stops along the bloody way
in Iran, Iraq, in Syria
then Lebanon, in Egypt
and Palestine,
in Bethlehem at the Church of the Nativity
where the Ottoman Turks
had made the doorways four feet high
to keep the wild horsemen out
to Jerusalem
where they meet God as three
a trinity of one almighty
city to destroy the houses of the father

a caravansary on the journey
backwards to Samarra
you put messages in the wall
went into the Holy Sepulcher
and stumbled along the Viva Dolorosa
saw the dome of the rock
where Mohammed rode
a winged stallion to Heaven
across the Mediterranean
in Monte Casino you protected
the mountain
then the monastery
and in Rome
lifted your face to the ceiling
of the Sistine Chapel.

Now hear
the word of God
as the pain goes through
you like hot lead
as your bones move
lengthwise into sleep upon the bed.
I have brought your last book
in prescience and redemption
in secret and in silence
open it, alone, look
study the compassionate
face of Mary
the distant face of Christ
the icons
we cannot escape
imprinted on us since
baptism, I hear you
pray and I pray too
for your life that spanned
the century
let the light hold fast
enter Hagia Sophia

the final house of the father
go then, backwards to Samarra
leave your shoes at the door
see Christ who never was
removed before your destiny
is achieved, explore.

A rise, and go
Vladimir
for the kingdom of Heaven
is upon you.

Since Patrick's passing and the compilation of this journal, we have experienced the loss of another two Boston College students.

Our thoughts, words, and love extend to Alexander Urtula and Saoirse Kennedy Hill.

