



Immortality at Seventy-five

for Merlyn E. Mowrey, Ph.D.

*Yesterday I noticed that my Japanese maple,
out by the front gate near an old hemlock, is not leafing
with its natural vigor, and its rear branches are dying.
I like it there with a night light on it.
I'll mulch around its roots, work in some fertilizer,
prune back the hemlock, water over summer.*

*Most mornings my wife and I walk our black Labrador
three miles through this wooded town.
Not all is right around here, there are trees and shrubs
struggling where they don't belong.
But I like living here. I like landscaping these two acres.
I'm grateful for this season of reborn senses.
For the wrong turns that led me here, I'm also grateful.*

*This red barn's an image of my grandfather's larger one.
This shrug came from my father.
I like the idea of passing on more than chromosomes.
I like the idea of leaving bits of heaven for the next guy.
I like the idea of leaving bites of myself in poems.*

*I like going to the post office, too. Still . . . Why is it,
five days out of six, I'm so disappointed with the mail?*

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