

Poetry by

56 Years

*By Suzanne Chait-Magenheim, LCSW
(about my mother who died in 2010 written 10 days after my father's funeral, 1995)*

Lost in his big armchair
Like a little lost waif
Clutching his photo.
Forlorn and lost
Is that him at the door?
56 years.
Together.
She waits.

Is this a cruel joke?
Suddenly, an empty house
She heard the rabbi say
His name at the funeral
Hey, that's Daddy's name
She whispered to her daughter
That's my husband's name
She thought
Wait til I tell him.
Be quiet, it's Daddy's funeral,
Her daughter whispered back.
Oh, he's dead. I forgot.
She waits.

Doesn't remember the hospital.
6 weeks they say....
I was with him...they say
I'm confused. Memory's not so good
anymore.
He died. Daddy's dead.
When's he coming home?
56 years.
She waits.

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The sweetest man who ever lived.
A jewel of a man, the rabbi said.
He's all I know.
He's the only one I ever liked,
I tell my daughter.
We had a wonderful love life,
I tell her.
But you dated a lot, her daughter said.
Oh, that didn't mean anything.
Oh, you yelled at him all the time
Oh, that didn't mean anything.
We were together.
That's all that mattered.
56 years.

Where's Daddy?
He died.
When?
10 days ago
That's all?
She waits.

I don't remember his being ill.
Oh, he sat in his chair and didn't go out anymore
But we were happy just to be together.
We were supposed to grow old together.
He did, my daughter says.
No, no, it's not possible.
He'll come in the door.
56 years.
She waits.