***Requiem to a Mother’s Love***

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After many years living together, we found a new way of living apart

when I married and moved away so long ago.

Phone calls, of course, but just as special were the envelopes–

conversations that would come almost weekly

with clippings and articles saying “I thought of you.”

The last envelope arrived the day after you left us to be with Dad and Tom,

with your many friends, and with God.

The envelope whispered quietly, “I’m thinking of you.”

Now I must find new ways of living with you

even as I know I am living without you.

The photos cycling through the digital frame are a great help-

I often turn around and there you are smiling in the happy times I treasure.

I smile back to say “I’m thinking of you.”

I know, it wasn’t the virus that took you in March. Or was it? The loneliness?

Perhaps God whispered to you, “It’s going to be a rough year. We could go now?”

And from your chair you nodded quietly, “Yes, I’m ready”.

Mom, how did you knowour last visit would be the last time

I would see you and hold you?

Your fears and tears as I was leaving came from a deep place of love-

raising heavy tears of my own.

*Did you know you were already leaving us?*

Years of leavings to go the distance home, you always blew me a kiss in the hall

and sent me off with smiles and waves- not tears.

But not that time.

I didn’t know then, but I surely know now,

that day you gave me the greatest gift of all.

You didn’t hold back, and we held onto each other a very long time.

A goodbye gift of love to be cherished always and forever.

Mom**,** you will be missed for the smiles and hugs and games and gifts and girl talk,

for enjoying my friends as much as I did,

for parading Red Sox and Patriot towels on your walker, for pizza on Sunday night visits,

for finding ways to live with each of us, even as we moved on to live apart.

- *GFWC Member Poetry Writing Contest Entry 2020*