

After The Rain

April is a pleasant month to die.
Temperate rain feeds the moist dirt
where my mother lies, her body feeding
the worms who till the soil, nourishing
the earth, making life from dead matter.
She rests under a majestic weeping
willow, limbs reaching down in maternal
embrace, stream singing lullabies.

Her home, now vacant, echoes
a different music. Plates clinking
in the sink, wooden spoon spinning
eggs into omelets, the glub glub glub
of freshly brewed coffee poured
into mismatched cups, our voices,
a chorus of raucous chatter, each vying
for first position in the front row.

We fall silent now, speechless among
the tschakes, old photos and diaries
written a lifetime ago. We make piles
of stuff, decide who will take what
and what we will give away. Some things
are easy to part with, they do not smell
like her, do not hold us like we held her.

There is unfinished business in her small
apartment. We will forage more, weep more,
discard more until there is nothing more
than to leave the door unlocked, place
her keys in the kitchen for the janitor,
while we pack our memories in our pockets
to keep our hands free to hold our grief.

Joan Page-Durante

