

While You Were Gone

Between one step and the next
The ghost of my father spoke to me,
Asking how life had been
In the time since he left
So suddenly.

I didn't know where to begin;
So much had happened!
The economy had imploded,
The president was new, young and Black,
The world situation was desperate,
As usual.

He interrupted me.
"We get the news in the afterlife.
What I meant was what are you feeling?
Do you miss me? Or did my death free you?
What are your emotions when
You think of me?"

How could I be anything but honest
With someone sharing my mind?
"Both are true," I replied.
"I miss the time I spent caring for you,
But I have more time, now that you are gone.
Sometimes the time is full,
Sometimes empty."

"I wish there had been a better way
To really get to know you. Reversing roles
Was utterly strange..."
He hesitated, and then replied,
"But would I have really known you
If we hadn't switched places?"

"Parents prepare their children
To handle what life deals,
But they never know if they've succeeded
Until they see their children tested.
You passed."

My foot fell, my father's voice began to fade.
"Will I hear from you again?" I asked.
"You know the answer," he replied.
"You'll see me again, eventually."
Yes, eventually we will all meet as ghosts,
But I hope eventually
Is not too soon.