

Ann Mirabile Lees

Encomium

The auditorium fills
with hundreds of people
eager to honor you.
A childhood friend speaks
of your generosity,
sense of humor, work ethic,
tells a story about an escapade
you shared as teenagers –
how you saved a parking place
at a busy beach for a friend's car,
pretending you didn't speak English
when a frustrated stranger
wanted to take the space.

Praises ring from the rafters.
Embarrassed and grateful,
you should soon step to the podium
to offer your thanks.

But in the plain pine box
where you now lie,
you cannot hear
a single word.

Ann Mirabile Lees is a retired research physician and a Massachusetts poet. Her poems have been published in the *Charles River Review*; the four issues of a short-lived journal, *Vineyard's Writing*; an anthology, *Martha's Vineyard Poets*; *Minerva Rising*; *Clementine Poetry Journal*, the *Martha's Vineyard Times*, and *Muddy River Poetry Review* Fall 2018 and Fall 2019. In 2012, Antrim House published her chapbook, *Night Spirit*.