

## **Elaine Sorrentino – Two Poems**

### **The Axe Men Cometh**

Old Avon lipstick samples  
with labels such as ripe cherry,  
champagne frost, coral flame

create a patchwork smudge  
in the emptied makeup drawer  
of my mother's 50's style triple dresser,

an antique now awaiting its fate  
along with 64 years of living,  
stacked on her three-season porch

soon someone else's porch;  
all items considered undesirable  
in the time of COVID.

No relatives high-hosey'd them  
no looky-loos to appreciate the dresser or roll-top,  
donation centers closed indefinitely;

the world remained cocooned  
within its quarantine sanctuary,  
who knew when it would end?

Days from the property closing,  
paying someone to haul away  
a lifetime of memories

for another family to enjoy  
remained the only viable option—  
we placed the call

and should have known,  
seeing JUNK splayed across  
the side of their box truck;

but the men worked with precision,  
gingerly removing each treasure  
careful not to ding the wood around her door.

Once out to the curb  
they whistled a different tune  
taking an axe to each piece

to better fit the splinters in their truck.  
Watching his childhood furniture smashed  
to unrecognizable was as jarring to my brother

as watching birds fly into windmills.  
He begged them to stop  
but they were on a tight schedule.

### **Word Association**

Nothing screams death  
more than a plate of bow-tie pasta,  
strewn across my mother's faded linoleum,  
like a marinara runway, from stove to sink.

Honoring his orderly inclinations,  
my father's final act – placing his dinner plate  
on the table – was interrupted  
when his huge heart surrendered,

in less time than butterfly-shaped  
farfalle takes to boil.  
Before we were prepared to say goodbye,  
the ambulance snatched

our fun-loving, ball-tossing,  
tire-changing, boo-boo-kissing,  
grill-mastering, grandson-adoring,  
bug-killing, churchgoing dad,

who sacrificed his carefree retirement  
to help his daughter and grandsons.  
*What will we do without him*  
we wondered in the hospital

waiting room - blessedly empty  
and away from public scrutiny.  
We wished against reason he wasn't gone,  
prayed it was just a scare,

but, when escorted for a last view,  
knew his essence had flown.  
Back at my parents' home,  
the air felt empty without his signature whistling,

eerily and unnaturally quiet,  
even in the kitchen where bow-tie pasta  
still screamed in silent crimson protest  
from the sauce-laden floor.

**Elaine Sorrentino**, Communications Director at South Shore Conservatory in Hingham, MA, has been published in *Minerva Rising*, *Willawaw Journal*, *Glass: A Journal of Poetry*, *Ekphrastic Review*, *Writing in a Women's Voice*, *Global Poemic*, *ONE ART: a journal of poetry*, *The Door is a Jar*, *Agape Review*, *Haiku Universe* and *wildamorris.blogspot.com*.