April, New Hampshire
by Sharon Olds

for Jane Kenyon and Donald Hall

Outside the door, a tiny narcissus
had come up through leaf mold. In the living room,
the old butterscotch collie let me
get my hand into the folds
of the mammal, and knead it. Inside their room
Don said, This is it, this is where
we lived and died. To the center of the maple
painted headboard—sleigh of beauty,
sleigh of night—there was an angel affixed
as if bound to it, with her wings open.
The bed spoke, as if to itself,
it sang. The whole room sang,
and the house, and the curve of the hill, like the curve
between
a throat and a shoulder, sang, in praising
grief, and the ground, almost, rang,
hollowed-out bell waiting for its tongue
to be lowered in. At the grave site,
next to the big, smoothed, beveled,
felled, oak home, like the bole
of a Druid duir—inside it what comes not
close to being like who she was—
he stood, beside, in a long silence,
minutes, like the seething harness-creaking
when the water of a full watering is feeding
down into the ground, and he looked at us,
at each one, and he seemed not just
a person seeing people, he looked
almost another species, an eagle
gazing at eagles, fierce, intent,
wordless, eyelidless, seeing each one,
seeing deep
into each—
miles, years—he seemed to be Jane,
looking at us for the last time

on earth.

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