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Final Copy

for Jo
artist and journalist
died 2002

I try to fill in the blanks
now that your face is finally blank in peace.
My life span sets the only dealing left
to precis why you did it.

What words - those naive spirits - can I raise
to lay commands like *justify* to rest?
I'm shady medium only trying to please,
only giving the needy what they need.

You had daughters you loved, work you were meant to do.
You had pain, too.

Always that fatal qualifier
that spoils the perfect tale -
the bad fairy, the uninvited guest,
whose tongue, sharp as a spindle, makes us bleed.

But for you there was no blood.
You decided to lie down for the last time.
instead of facing a future of lying down -
twenty years on your back in a nursing home.

Now I lay me down to sleep.
I pray my friends my soul to keep.

You had to do it to survive as you.
The exit bag did the trick.
Journalist to the end,
you took yourself out of circulation.

You edited your final statement.
Slipped into bed, slim as a single column.
All you wanted to say fit into the act,
except the word goodbye.

JERI KROLL
ADELAIDE, SA

SPRING PASSES

Spent wattle pollen
lies in gold drifts
along the pavement's edge.

Evil sapphires of a car break-in
(Why do I not hear and know?)
sparkle under a dwarf tree.

I crush pink pepper berries
under my shoe.

Justice delays.

Spring passes to a bitter summer

MARGARET DINGLE
NORWOOD, SA