

Caregiver

by Maureen Walsh

You wake up early
and tell yourself you can do this.
A sense of determination
with Buddhist-like thought,
“One minute at a time.”
You go out into the kitchen
and ask him to pour you a coffee.
He stands there acknowledging nothing.
You hear the morning news on TV.
You would like to run.
Later on, a nurse comes to visit.
He rallies, and you roll your eyes.
He shakes the woman’s hand
as he remarks on this beautiful October day.
You stand there and start doubting yourself
and wonder is it as bad as you think?
The phone doesn’t ring much anymore.
The advice givers and doubters
long gone, and you think
good riddance.
Still you can’t help but remember that day
When you went to the state park.
There were families there
picnicking and laughing.
Kids jumping in the water.
You sat there like a couple
out of an Edward Hopper painting,
with no picnic and no words.

