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My Grandmother and I Say Goodbye Nancy Lagomarsino

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Nancy Lagomarsino

MY GRANDMOTHER AND I SAY GOODBYE

to Blanche K. Rice
(1893-1978)

When I try to say goodbye to you, it feels as though I'm floating in goodbyes. Perhaps it's not possible to make a lasting gesture at the speed with which we move away from one another. Afraid I might never see you again, I torture myself with fears that my side of the goodbye is not worthy. In fact, our goodbye seems to exist separately, seizing us hastily before slipping away to join others of its kind.

I can't remember one goodbye that left me with a sense of true parting—is any goodbye final? I hope, when our bodies have been erased, we'll put on the faces we knew one another by, because that is the only way I can imagine finding you. After that, we won't need our faces, but, briefly, our spirits will push them forward, until the wind, or a similar force, scatters them.

Someday, we'll return with new faces, perhaps not to New England, perhaps not to houses of wood. I'll be scrambled up as one of those men whose hearts I can't see into, and I'll look for you among young women, though I won't know what I'm searching for, or remember the source of my longing.