

A Man Dies

by Sheila Luecht

Upon His Death

"...and who will mourn me?", asked the man who was near his death. "Will it be the bill collector who has no one else to hound, or the mail carrier who will see no more private messages for me scrawled across a postcard?" He turned to the spirit in the room with him, languishing against a bookcase, filled with knowledge about things he never had the time to know. "Why have you come now? Is it not too soon? I am only sixty six and I have more to do. I was making a doll house for my granddaughters and a jeweled frame with turquoise fallen from dancing natives during a festival. It is a sand painting of the corn goddess, don't you want me to finish it, don't you want to see it?" Now pacing, he notices his own lifeless body curled on the chaise, hugging an old blanket brought back from his war time service in South America. "I see I have no negotiation, and yet, I am here, why are you here Spirit?"

The spirit smiled and held out his hand, the light in the room magnified and he brushed past the books and the thoughts still hanging in the small alcove, "You are ready now. You have thought about who will mourn you, and now you will see. Come away then and look, see the boy you helped grow to manhood, see the people who bloomed in your kindness, see the strangers who admired your artistic self, who admired your leadership. See all the people for just one second whose lives you touched. Tell me now who will mourn."

As the man glanced around the walls of the small space disappeared, and in the midst of great light there were too many faces to count, too many individual, different stories to hear inside his mind. He became lighter, he became the light and instead of who would mourn, he received a broader gift, one of understanding, of satisfaction, of peace, all due to a life well lived. He grasped that he

would not come back this way again, that his was the final product,
that the ideas he left behind made his journey complete.

