

Where Nobody Is

Last weekend, a friend asked to go for a walk—
somewhere without people, she said
She doesn't want to see people:
hiking trails are packed,
so I suggest our town's cemetery.

There are people, you know, but not really.
She agrees.
We meet at the entrance.
What a beautiful place to be put to rest—
overlooking the pacific.

We walk up and down the hills,
reading tombstones, sharing stories.
It's all too familiar.
I spent my childhood there:
my Austrian mother obsessed with death.

My friend spoke of her mother's passing,
and her ashes are in the closet
under a fake candle, and how each day,
she whispers *good night*.

No wind in this cemetery; trees are still.
Something in the distance beside a gravestone
caught our eye—a balloon on a stick in ground,
gently swaying back and forth.
flowers beside.

We glance at one another and walk in its direction.
We arrive to gravestone of Jose Garcia:
January 13, 1989 - April 1, 2016.
A photo of his truck in the lower corner:
gone but never forgotten.
joined the twenty-seven club.

I glance at my watch. It's his birthday.

He called us to sing to him and we did:
we wished him a peaceful journey

I still ask if a cemetery
is really an empty place.

Bio:

Diana Raab, PhD is an award-winning blogger, speaker, and author. Her two latest books are *Writing for Bliss: A Seven-Step Plan for Telling Your Story and Transforming Your Life*, and *An Imaginary Affair: Poems whispered to Neruda* (Finishing Line Press, 2020). She blogs for *Psychology Today*, *Thrive Global*, *Sixty and Me*, *Good Men Project*, and *The Wisdom Daily*, among others. She can be found at www.dianaraab.com.