

Monday, February 9, 7:55 pm
for Steffie Brooks

One heart
and associated breath
will now be referred to
in the past tense.

Only last week we spoke
of thoughts that came too rapidly
(no strength to write anything down
and insufficient memory),
considered a tape recorder
so you could make the rest of us aware.
Just twenty-four hours later, however,
you told me it was too late
even for that.

Not the first time
that I have been a day too late.
Accept my apologies nonetheless.

The pain is in the past too, of course.
For that, at least, we can be thankful now.
And memories remain strong:
your wisdom,
 your heart,
 your love—
even your pain, though
I do not suppose any of us
can truly imagine your pain.

I think of how I got to know you
in recent years, discovering
a comrade of intelligence,
 dedication,
 compassion
(not so common as we are led to believe).
Just a month ago
what you wanted above all else
was to remain connected to life—
find some way to access the internet
from your hospital bed,
which we did. How rapidly
the disconnect intruded then,

until this morning when, alternately,
I stroked your arm, held your hand
as life surrendered to the current.

No way to know if my presence
was felt at that moment.
But I was aware of yours,
of all the connections in particular
with those who came to share
a portion of your final days.

I am aware still,

think again
of your wisdom,
 your heart,
 your love—
even your pain.

At this moment
I should probably say:
especially your pain.

Steve Bloom
February 2009