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In Memory Of Dr. Leroy Thomas

Priscilla Johnson

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In Memory Of Dr. Leroy Thomas

by his student
Priscilla Johnson

I wish I could hear you say,
like your favorite author Mark Twain
"The news of my death has been greatly exaggerated,"
then I would know you weren't gone.

Memories of you wash over me,
filling my eyes with selfish unshed tears.
The things I remember,
such vivid memories.
I must write.
I must write.

The first day in class.
"I see you're from Erick?"
"Yes."
"Well, have you read Margie Snowden North's book,
To Chase a Dream?"
My smart answer,
"Yes, and by the way have you?"

You laughed.
A friendship formed right away.
Mutual respect.

You said,
"Go home and write a poem."
I eventually wrote more than fifty.

You said, "Submit."
I did.
You published.

Your laughter created my laughter.
It rang out of me; bubbled over both of us.
Your courage shaming me,
when I thought I couldn't do.

You let me serve you,
because you knew it was not out of pity.

When I embarrassed myself by fixing your collar,
You told me a funny story
of a friend who cut your meat.

Naively,
I thought we'd share years of writing.
Student to teacher,
Editor to author,
Author to author,
Friend to friend.

Your time here was too short for me,
maybe too long for you.
My tears fall.

Because you believed
in me,
I must write.
I must write.