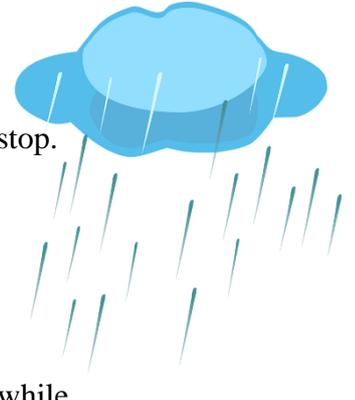


Mighty
by Lynn Fraser



We were sat in the car, Mammie and I, waiting for the rain to stop.
Listening to it. Watching it. Oohing and aaahing.
Lashing doon it was, torrential, monsoon-like.
A thunder-plump and we were under attack.

But yet at the same time comforting, safe.
Disconnected from the world, the two of us,
our own unit in battle cocooned in that wee metal capsule for a while.

‘I want to talk to you about something, darling’
She changes the emotion gear in the car and takes my hand.
It was just days before she was going in for a high-risk op, an abdominal aortic aneurysm.

She talks about not being here, about dying. I listen.
‘I’m not frightened, just a wee bit apprehensive,’ she says with a smile.

Mammie’s faith was strong. Always had been.
It had seen her through her cancer, the suicide of her son, the death of her sister and her husband.
All in quick succession – and in that order.
Life can be a b...d!

‘... and I wonder what it’s going to be like!’
Smiling genuinely, she turns away from me, and looks to the window.

When my brother died, it was like a bomb had gone off.
Mammie had carried her grief and ours,
scooped us all up as a family in her arms and saved us from drowning.
She stumbled at times, aye,
but she’d always put one foot in front of the other and
with fortitude and grace she’d kept going.

She’s looking into the rain now,
Which looks like a melting, kinetic, watery mass
as the water reverberates off the windscreen.

‘.... But I know I’ll see everyone: your Dad, Maureen – and Gerard.
Och, I’ll give him such a good kick up the backside when I see him –
but after I’ve given him the biggest hug.’

‘So don’t be sad, darling,’ my Mammie says.
‘Well, be sad a little! And sure, have a cry, as I know you will.
But I’ve had a good life, a lovely wee life.
So please be happy for me, because I will be happy.’

She’s smiling. And there are tears in the wee metal capsule.

(Lynn Fraser wrote this poem about her Mum, Agnes Prior - mother, too, of the late Fr Gerry Prior – and about a conversation she had with her in 2012. Agnes came safely through the operation but eventually died on Boxing Day, 2016. The poem was published during Book Week Scotland in 2019 in ‘Blether’, a collection of true stories written for the people of Scotland.)