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Stone Angels

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STONE ANGELS

L. E. Wilson

when I am dead
I think there will be no stone angels
with lichened faces
and crumbling wings, in cemeteries
there will be no sad family
to seal my photograph behind glass
there will be
no sad family
I think I will outlive them all
I will not die of old age
—I decline, thank you—
nor by accident
so some very distant day
when I am sleepy at last
a typed official document shall read
“cause of death: stopped living”

St. Peter will probably card me
at the Pearly Gates

when I am dead
I desire no stone angels
not even pretty ones
not even Michaelangelo's
when I am through with my body
you may grind it fine
and bury it in the compost heap
or save out a shank portion
for stewing with some nice potatoes
a small parsnip and a bay leaf
—bon appétit—
or play with it in medical school
there is nothing sacred in meat, I think

when I am dead, someday
I shall be no more free
than I am now
and no less
stone angels weigh heavier upon the living
than upon the dancing dead

carve me no angels
and cry me no clinging salt tears