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Benches

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Benches

Our best talks happen when we're sitting on a bench
Just the two of us

And we usually are seeing something beautiful
Though the last time it was just outside of the library

Our best talks are the deep ones
Ones that talk of life, death, happiness

My mother doesn't put much stock in happiness

And she would never simplify

With something as shallow as "Look the sky is blue!"

But you can tell her anything you need to

Even things you barely tell yourself

She will listen, as carefully as she can

Once when we were on a bench somewhere

And I had told her how unhappy I was

How I longed for the days of being a mother

And she told me this stunner:

"You will probably never feel as happy as when you were raising your kids"

And my heart burst apart right on that bench

When I first heard it

I wasn't strong enough

To accept it

It seemed too hard to me

Thinking that the rest of my life

Would be in the shadow of the highest hill

Now I understand

And know that she was helping me

And freeing me from an empty chase

Liberating me from searching

Needing me to make my peace

And finding peace because of it

When she has left me

I will be on a bench somewhere

And I will hold onto my memories

And be so thankful

Because she taught me how to hold onto something

And all the time I'm letting go

Gail Cairns