

AMERICAN LIFE IN POETRY

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Grief can endure a long, long time. A deep loss is very reluctant to let us set it aside, to push it into a corner of memory. Here the Arkansas poet, Andrea Hollander Budy, gives us a look at one family's adjustment to a death.

For Weeks After the Funeral

The house felt like the opera,
the audience in their seats, hushed, ready,
but the cast not yet arrived.

And if I said anything
to try to appease the anxious air, my words
would hang alone like the single chandelier

waiting to dim the auditorium, but still
too huge, too prominent, too bright, its light
announcing only itself, bringing more

emptiness into the emptiness.

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