

*Jane Blanchard*

**Inimitability**

*remembering Stanley Plumly  
(1939-2019)*

We shared a week in Sicily, my husband there,  
your wife as well, our Bread Loaf workshop intimate  
enough, with six participants, one auditor,  
and you around a table, where you growled a bit  
while commenting on what a poem did or did  
not do. At times you took a marker to the white-  
board, showed us what a line or more should do instead,  
as if another's style and yours were much alike.  
When meeting privately, you first observed my work  
had merit, then directed my attention to  
a poem of mine perhaps excessively overt,  
a second oddly reticent, a third untrue.  
It took a widely read yet nonconforming mind  
to recognize the full potential of design.

**To Carolyn**

on whose birthday I was born

I learned of your last illness, then your death,  
through lawyers. How I hope you had no fears  
of leaving. How I pray your final breath  
was not a rant against someone with years,  
months, days remaining — namely Jane. Our lives  
were bound by common parents who misused  
us willfully. One daughter yet survives —  
mere me, the younger one, who long refused  
to bow to power — for better, not for worse,  
I hope and pray again—however hard  
is left the effort to escape the curse  
of any generation. So, on guard  
as always, never mind the customary,  
I offer this as your obituary.