Karen
by Ron Jensen

Karen, we miss you,
We can’t believe you’re gone,
And even though it’s hard,
We know we must go on.

You’re in a better place now,
And you can be with friends,
Like Paisley and Sophia,
Whose time with you they’ll spend.

So good bye for now,
Until we meet again.
Our love for you
Will never end.

Excerpt from “Burial Ground”
by MaryAnn Widerburg

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The darkness looks deeper inside the Logan Cemetery. As if I could reach out and sense its texture. My roommate Ashley and I stare down a tunnel of pines and aspens. Ignoring the sign that says the cemetery is off limits after dark, I test the asphalt pathway with my sneaker before stepping one foot into the cemetery. “C’mon,” I say. “We don’t have to go see the Weeping Woman. We’ll just walk through to the other gate. Then we can go home.”

Ashley grabs my forearm and follows behind me as we advance deeper into the tree-lined path. In the pine-filtered moonlight, the aspens’ dappled bark looks like peeling corpses. Crows roosting in branches pulse wings above our heads. Once we get halfway to the exit, the crows settle, flapping a wing only occasionally. I stop my feet.

Breathe in the scent of pine needles and fall leaves. My eyes adjust to the blackness. I take a step into inviting darkness and feel a tugging at my elbow. Ashley’s feet stick to the ground.

“Can we go back, now?” she asks. “I don’t like this.”

“We’re already halfway,” I say.

“Please. I think I’m gonna pee my pants.”

“Okay,” I let a long breath through my nose before turning back. Crows squawk as we pass under their perch.

“We can come back with Shenise on Halloween.” Ashley says when we reach the gate.

“Yeah,” I say, but we won’t come back. I run my hand along the top of the wrought iron fence. When it ends, I want to climb it and melt into still darkness beyond white tombstones.

“I’m cold,” Ashley says. “I don’t know why you wanted to go in there in the first place.”