



**A few minutes to stop by.**

VISITING HOURS BY ROBYN WEAVER

Before you had to move out of the house  
That you had called home for my entire life  
Before you forgot how to drive  
And forgot to pay the bills

Before you got sick  
And got angry for reasons unknown  
Before you forgot my name or  
Confused me with someone else

Before the disease claimed your mind  
And then your body  
Before it took your spirit  
And then took you from us

You asked for one simple thing  
Something for which I could never  
Quite find the time  
Until it was too late

A visit, nothing more—  
A few minutes to stop by  
Tell you I love you  
Remind you of how important you are

Five minutes to talk about life, or  
Gossip about the neighbors, or  
Ask you about the good old days—  
Those memories now forever lost

But I could never find those five minutes  
Until they said we would lose you, though  
In truth, you were already gone—  
Your mind claimed months before

But even then I didn't understand  
I thought there would be more time—  
There is never enough time  
I know that now

I only hope you know that  
I meant every word you could not hear  
In those lonely hours spent with you—  
Too late for anything but regret

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#### ROBYN WEAVER

Visiting Hours is about regret. I've heard a lot of people say something to the effect of, "No regrets, only learning experiences." I love the idea behind that saying—the idea that everything has a meaning, everything has a purpose, everything happens for a reason. But sometimes, it's just not possible, at least not for me. When I was a kid, I visited my Grandma all the time. But, as most of us do, I grew up, and as I got older, I visited less and less. I had to work, I had school, I had to live life. Visiting just wasn't a priority, even though every time I talked to her, that was the one thing she asked, "Come see me, okay?" And I would answer, "Yes, ma'am, I will," but something always seemed to come up. And then the Alzheimer's started to take her mind, and it became "uncomfortable" to go see her because she forgot things or got confused. And then she went into the coma. That's when it got real for me—that's when I knew time was up. I was too late. I spent hours sitting next to her in hospice, just hoping she would wake up for five seconds so she would know that I was there, that I loved her, that I was sorry I wasn't better to her. But she never did. It's been nine years since she passed away, but I still think about her every day. I absolutely regret not going to visit, not spending time with her when she was still her. It's a learning experience, for sure, but I also hold onto that regret—I feel it every day.

My work has been published in The Auburn Circle (Auburn University) and the 34thParallel Magazine Issue 36.

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