



I Miss Peter Jennings

Every evening by six-thirty
All chores had to be completed.
No arguing about who does what.
Mom would install herself in her chair
near the picture window facing our street
and together we watch *World News Tonight*
with Peter Jennings.

Shhhh now.
I got the spare chair,
sometimes the cushion on the floor next to the dog.
I could see both the television
And Mom.
I would watch as Mom took out her tatting shuttle—
One she had gotten as a girl scout in the forties—
One I had wrapped with an enormous amount
Of thread
Just before the show began.

There would be a click click click of the beak-like ends
releasing just enough thread to begin
as she paid close attention to
the quick opening summary,
events of the day around the world
that almost always meant a war,
politics, or something-to me-dark
unsettling, yet delivered with a calming voice.
Peter's voice took on a rhythm
as my mother wrapped the tail of thread
around her left hand and began.

In and out, in and out.
Creating knots and loops and a design that would
eventually reveal itself
as Peter transitioned from story to story
introducing the lives of strangers.

A cadenced delivery with just the right amount of intensity
offering comfort without fear
no matter how dire.
A swift half hour that would take us
to dark corners of the planet
together
there in our living room
With the mismatched furniture, softly panting dog,
lingering smells from supper
and gentle clicking of the shuttle guided by skilled fingers
creating lace from bright white thread.

It was an anchor to the day
just thirty minutes
of companionship and comfort—My Mom
and Peter Jennings.
Both crafting moments
into a network of feelings.
Crafting memories of events
into twisted threads—
strands of history,
Mine and the world.

—Kimberly Beckham