

Music, Movies, Sunrises ...

What tears at my heart these days? What pulls me to a place of deep sorrow, near anguish? A place of such missing I cry out loud to the empty chair, the silent conversation.

I listen to the mellow trumpet of Chris Botti, a clarion call of loveliness as he and Yo-Yo Ma interpret *Cinema Paradiso*. I listen to this piece, sent via email by a friend. Sunrise illuminates a golden maple, still full-leafed and impossibly perfect beyond our deck. Mist hangs low in the distant forest preserve. The bed is empty beside me. The shower is still.

I thought I was “getting better,” moving on, prone to fewer tears. But Thursday night I catch the beginning of “The Way We Were,” then watch it all the way through, Barbra Streisand and Robert Redford in all their youthful beauty, the film itself full of pathos, meaning. Even the words “the way we were” resonate. Bob and I saw this movie together. We were young and lithe with two little girls and one little boy. Our hair showed no traces of gray, our faces no lines. We were lean (not lumpy). We played tennis and ran and cycled and skipped the stairs two at a time—both up and down. Once I saw him at O’Hare take the stairs that way with a full sample case in each hand! He used a hand lawnmower then, walking the downs of our acre of property and running the ups just for exercise.

Unlike us, Barbra Streisand and Robert Redford divorce. But like us, there is still forever love between them. When they

chance to meet years later on the streets of New York, they embrace one last time in a way that says it all, no need for words.

The movie ends. The credits roll. Our family room is just the same. The cozy fur throw in which Bob wrapped himself the months before he died—so cold was he last winter—lays neatly folded, untouched. The room, the house, empty, silent. Sadly reminiscent of the way we were.

Now, this morning I play Ennio Morricone's "Gabriel's Oboe," this too with Yo-Yo Ma. The maple's gold is brilliant. The music is of Heaven, heavenly. Sights and sounds that he is most likely hearing, but with dimensions and beauty and resonance beyond my wildest dreams. I close my eyes to these elegant strains and hang on to the NOW. And ask for grace to live it out with gratitude. 🍃