

## Keith Tornheim – Two Poems

Dear Dad

On TV I watched another father pass,  
with his grown child close to hold his hand;  
but you left suddenly from the nursing home,  
the ambulance to the hospital not really needed.  
The doctor called to tell me you were dead  
upon arrival, nothing they could do.  
So I came, but did not feel compelled  
to hold your hand, just gazed upon the husk  
from which the you had fled.

Pebbles of Remembrance

I have not placed a pebble  
on my mother's grave.  
She lies far away,  
wrapped in a shroud  
on a hillside in Israel.  
So on Yom Kippur at Yiskor,  
as well as at Pesach,  
I voice our people's hope:  
Next year in Jerusalem.

I have not placed a pebble  
on my father's grave.  
He has none.  
His ashes are scattered;  
perhaps some float on the winds.  
So wherever I lay a pebble  
down on the ground,  
it may suffice.  
Perhaps some of him is here.

**Keith Tornheim** is a biochemistry professor at Boston University School of Medicine. He was a co-winner of a Great Lakes College Association poetry contest in 1967 and is now a relapsed poet, with poems published in *Ibbetson Street*, *Poetica*, *Spare Change News* and *Lyrical Somerville* (*The Somerville News*). His poems have been a part of High Holiday and other services of his congregation ([www.shirhadash-ma.org/poetry.html](http://www.shirhadash-ma.org/poetry.html)).