

# Body Language

Category: Poems

written by Alan Harris | June 17, 2016

## **Alan Harris**

after my father had his stroke  
we never spoke again  
but that didn't stop us  
from reading each other's faces

recognizing the punctuated pauses  
periods and question marks  
etched in eyes, sighs and sad smiles

It took both hands to hold one of his  
that first day in the hospital  
as my eyes whispered how much I cared  
and his smile replied, *Thank you*

but before I left his side that night  
our sighs acknowledged  
the painful truth  
that despite how well  
we finally understood each other  
it was regrettably apparent  
how little time we had left to talk

## **About the poet:**

Alan Harris is a sixty-one-year-old hospice volunteer who helps patients write short stories, letters and poetry. "I'm what's called a 'Tuesday story' writer, as in *Tuesdays with Morrie* by Mitch Albom. I'm called in when a hospice patient would like help writing a short memoir, letter or poem. It's a fantastic experience to be the last person to listen to an important story straight from the source. And then I get to help mold it into a cherished, hard-copy family legacy." Harris is working on his MSW degree at Wayne State University, Detroit.

## **About the poem:**

"This poem is a cathartic recreation of the day I was summoned to the hospital to be with my father, right after a major stroke had stolen from him the ability to talk. Without words, we still engaged in the most important conversation we would ever have with each other."

## **Poetry editors:**

Johanna Shapiro and Judy Schaefer