

# Seven-and-a-Half Years in Sacred Space

Category: Holding On

written by Peggy Antenucci | April 26, 2023

Seven-and-a-half years into cancer treatments and two months before he died, before we knew he would die, my husband insisted on hooking up the new dishwasher in our old kitchen. No plumber would be paid when he could do it himself. The *doing it himself* wasn't the hard part; it was the *getting back up*. I came home from my nursing work to find my beloved lying on his back on the wooden floor in front of the dishwasher.

When I asked what he was doing, he replied matter of factly, "Just resting, waiting," he said, "to get the oomph to stand up again." Putting down my bags and taking off my coat, I lay down on the worn floorboards beside him. My head on his slowly rising and falling chest, I waited with him, listening to his heart beat.

Two months later, I crawled into his hospice bed lying beside his cooling body, absent the heartbeat. My head on his still chest, I tucked my hands into the crevice of his armpits against his torso to find the last trace of warmth.

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