

## Tom Hansen

### Last Letter to Lee

(Stuart Lee “Moon” Hansen, 1945-2022)

*... all that will survive of it  
will be what you remember . . . .*

– Richard Shelton

Lee, I was three when I first saw you  
days after your birth.  
One look and I knew things  
would not be the same around here.  
A week later I said to myself,  
“I guess OK, he can stay.”  
I even wrote you a poem –  
“Lee, Lee, full of pee.”

\*

Seventy-seven years later, I can say  
I never saw you angry,  
never heard you complain –  
not when you had that liver transplant,  
not in that last long year when you spent  
more days hospitalized than at home.  
And I can’t remember arguing with you.  
Not about anything. Not even once.  
All of which raises a question:  
What’s wrong with you?

What’s wrong with you is  
you are no longer here.

After Nancy called to tell us you died,  
I looked out the window a long time  
at the enduring world:  
tall ponderosa that seem to survive forever  
and outcroppings of rock that last even longer.  
I stood and stared, my mind a blank,  
my eyes full of blinding light.

\*

I see you now as you were  
those last thirty-odd years:  
your Rip Van Winkle beard  
reaching down to your navel,  
obscuring the quizzical message  
on your T-shirt *du jour*.  
The one message I still recall  
and probably always will:  
“Good enough never is.”

You are gone.  
That is not good enough –  
not by a long shot, pal.

You are gone, but I see you still.  
My hearing is failing fast,  
I have to squint to read –  
hell’s bells, it’s even a challenge  
to take a decent piss any more –  
but, Lee, I can still see you.

You are gone, old man.  
You are gone, little brother.  
But listen: I see you, I see you....

