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Flower for a Teacher

Edwin Romond
Retired

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Flower for a Teacher

by Edwin Romond

in Memory of Father Carlton Paul Brick, S.D.S. (1935-2013)

I'm here to place a rose in this room
where he taught my sophomore English class.
I want to leave a tiny flower with a mighty beauty
to honor a teacher who never threatened us, never
got in our faces but did get in our hearts. He taught us
the tragic soul of *Death of a Salesman*, introduced
us to Laura in *The Glass Menagerie*, to Holden

in *Catcher in the Rye*, and opened the door to poetry
in all its splendor and truth. And we learned
how to write because of all his hours of giving
our words on loose leaf his scholarly attention.
He didn't yell, he didn't insult us, he was demanding
but never demeaning and he never let the specter
of the S.A.T. get in the way of authentic learning.

So I've come to this room 50 years later to thank
with a flower the soft spoken priest who asked
almost as much of us as he did of himself and
gave me the model of English teaching excellence
I could only strive for but never attain.
I leave a rose here in memory of Father Carlton,
who stirred in me a passion for literature and writing,

who every day in this classroom quietly changed my life.

Edwin Romond is the author of eight collections of poetry and has been awarded writing fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and from both the New Jersey and Pennsylvania State Councils on the Arts. In 2013 he received the New Jersey Poetry Prize for his poem, "Champion." Garrison Keillor has twice featured Romond's poetry on National Public Radio and his memoir, "The Ticket," appears in Tim Russert's *New York Times* bestseller, *Wisdom of Our Fathers*.

Now retired, Romond taught English at Metuchen High School and Warren Hills Regional High School, Washington, New Jersey. A native of Woodbridge, New Jersey, he now lives in Wind Gap, Pennsylvania, with his wife and son.