

## Heroic Death

There is a certain heroism in facing death,  
a heroic posture when challenged  
by frailty and fragility.

The illness exhausts us,  
drains energy from our body.  
The physicians are puzzled –  
diagnosis and prognosis both draped in doubt.

We recognize the truth of choicelessness,  
the truth of the sages:  
“By dint of force were you born and by dint of force will you die.”

What is left for us is the inner choice in the secrets of the heart.  
On whatever bed we lie,  
we are warriors,  
armed with steel resolve, with weapons of the spirit.

Against the melancholy that ties us down,  
against the dark forces that counsel surrender,  
we struggle.

I will not leave this world regretfully.  
I will not allow my dreams to turn into nightmares,  
my memories of celebration and laughter erased.

I am no victim.  
I have stumbled and fallen and risen.  
I have dreamt glorious dreams  
I will not allow the shadows to eclipse the stars I have glimpsed.

I have lived a story to be remembered.  
I have lived through storms.  
I will die a hero.

- Harold M. Schulweis