



PROJECT MUSE®

Dedicated

Kathy Fagan

Pleiades: Literature in Context, Volume 40, Issue 2, Summer 2020, pp.
12-14 (Article)

Published by University of Central Missouri, Department of English
and Philosophy

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1353/plc.2020.0108>



➔ *For additional information about this article*

<https://muse.jhu.edu/article/759347>

Kathy Fagan

Dedicated

The way I remember it,
I caught beauty
Like a flu,

Via handshake or high five
Or a thank-you-
For-your-service

Between the guys at the V.A.
The one who lurched
Toward me, touching

Me, saying:
You like poetry,
More vision than question.

The one who said,
Overhearing me correct
My Korean conflict-era dad:

Go easy, you won't have him
Long. Or the one
Who said: You watch

Him like a hawk;
Just let him go.
In the molecular

Biology lab, each tank
Full of impossibly
Small fish bears

A sign that says: You are responsible
For your own deads.
Plural. Sure.

The older I get, the more
I am reminded of song
Dedications on the radio.

I called Cousin Brucie
To send out “I’ve Got You,
Babe” to my parents

On their wedding anniversary.
When he played them
“Gypsies, Tramps, and Thieves,”

Bob and Mary Anne
Were understandably confused,
But appreciative nonetheless.

I myself have
Had three partners
In my lifetime,

And what I still love best about
Two of them
Is how I never had to explain

That joke. There was all that
Time listening
To radio or TV,

TV turned internet.
I wish I could
Dedicate those spent hours

Now to my mom,
So she could come back awhile.
She wouldn’t have to know



She was dead,
Like we didn't know then
How much time was passing.

I would play
With her hair like I used to,
And tell her stories until

She began to doze off
Like she used to,
Waking only to say:

I didn't ever know you
Loved me, Kath. You never
Wanted affection from us, Kath.

Just like she used to.
The wrong song, somehow
The right song, playing on and on,

Like a perfect virus.