

Poetry Porch: Poetry

Capes

By Helen Heineman

My husband loved to wear capes.
He dashed across campus,
His cape flying behind him,
On his way to teach
His popular classes.

Each was slightly different.
One Loden green,
Another collared,
The third had buttons
Made from stag horns,
Discarded each year by the deer,
And perfect for heavy fabrics.

John never cared for style.
He liked the looseness of capes,
You never had to worry
How the thing fit.
He wore only what appealed to him,
Even though no one else wore one.

After he died,
I offered them to our sons.
But they prefer denim or leather jackets
Emblazoned with
Allegiance to a local team.

The judge in one of my lawyer son's cases
Noticed his name, and asked
If his father had taught at Boston College.
Remembering the cape,
Wondered if my son would adopt
The style. Or did he lack his father's dash?

Who can know? But, my son told me,

If I face that judge again,
I might wear one.
It could only do you some good,
I thought.

Meanwhile, I'm keeping them safe.
In my cedar closets,
They hang regimentally in a row,
Plied with mothballs in summer,
And aired out in winter.

Four sons,
And none of them as yet
Has claimed one of the capes.
If someday they all ask for one,
I'll be one short.