

GLEN SORESTAD

HOSPITAL VIGIL

Glen Sorestad (1937-) was born in Vancouver, British Columbia. His family moved to Saskatchewan in 1947, and he earned a Bachelor of Education degree at the University of Saskatchewan in 1963. He taught in Yorkton for four years before moving to Saskatoon, where he taught at the Alvin Buckwold School for two years. He then taught at Evan Hardy Collegiate from 1969 to 1981, when he quit to write full-time. He has since published numerous collections of poems, and in 2000 he became Saskatchewan's first poet laureate. The following poem was published in the autumn 1997 issue and included in the collections *Today I Belong to Agnes* (2000) and *Leaving Holds Me Here: Selected Poems, 1975-2000* (2001), which won the Saskatoon Book Award.

I stand beside her bed,
watch her shrunken body
rise and fall in fitful sleep
and it is hard. This body
on the bed is not my mother;
my mother has already gone.
This is just a dying woman,
a body to fill the hours
of the doctors and nurses,
a body to fill the charts
with data to analyze
and cost out in dollars,
statistics for the health
of the health care system.
My mother is already gone,
though this covered shape
in the bed rises and falls,
rises and falls in sleep.