

Little Green Pill
by Madelyn D. Kamen

He was there every day,
Looking at her from the other side of the window,
Smiling at her as she handed over his little green pill.
He wasn't that old and she wasn't that young;
Neither had ever married.
She was a psychiatric nurse's aide who understood the inmates
Because she had been abused as a child, pulling into herself
To avoid punishment.
He was there because he had been bullied as a little boy,
Making it a habit of staying away from the big guys who could
Beat him up.
Now, they were adults, albeit imperfect ones, who
Occasionally would sit together on her coffee breaks
And tell light-hearted jokes. And forget their pain for a while.
Their shrink had suggested they might have a lot in common.
And truth be told, it had occurred to both of them.

One day, he was not at the window.
On her break she sought him out.
In his room, the bed was stripped.
His toiletries and clothes were gone.
Where was he, she wondered?
She asked the nurses.
They answered in soft voices with hooded eyes.
They said they didn't know.
The next day in the obituary column she found his name.
She went to the funeral with the little cup and a pillbox in her
purse. After service was over, she pulled out the familiar little
green pill, the one she had given him every day, and dropped it in
the coffin.

Author Bio: Madelyn D. Kamen, D.P.H. is a free-lance writer and the founder of a document development and management-consulting firm. Prior to establishing this company, she was an associate dean and professor at the University of Texas Health Science Center at Houston. Kamen holds masters and doctorate degrees in public health. She has served on numerous boards in the community, particularly in the areas of women and children's health and welfare.