To Soar

Posted on May 31, Posted by Lois Lowry Category Uncategorized

I am about to leave for Maine, for the summer, so am packing the car and realizing sadly that I no longer have to worry about leaving room for the dog to sprawl. He loved riding in the car. Mostly he slept, curled in the back seat, but somehow magically he could tell when we were about to arrive at a place he loved - either of our two homes, for example; or the kennel where he stayed when we went on a trip; he was always very happy there. Somehow, though he seemed sound asleep, as the car made its final turn toward any of those destinations, His eyes would open, his ears flick, and then he would be on his feet and at the car window to supervise the arrival.

No more.

I realized, while going back and forth to the car, that the bearded iris in my garden here in Cambridge are bursting open. They are among my favorites, and I'll miss the apricot colored ones unless they decide to come to life in the next hour. But the deep almost-black are in full bloom now, and the light blue-violet ones as well. I got my camera back out of the car in order to photograph them.

While focusing, I realized that in the background would be the blurred image of the sculpture that was placed there in memory of my son, whose death also occurred on Memorial Day. Eleven years ago. It seems yesterday.

Grey was a fighter pilot in the US Air Force, and he died in the cockpit of an F-15. He loved that sleek silver-colored plane and was one of the best, I am told, of the ones who flew them. So we commissioned the sculpture to be created from stainless steel and to convey the feeling of flight. When it was finished, the sculptor told us that it would have to have a name, and so, in consultation with my son's young widow, Margret, we chose a German word: *Schweben*. Grey lived in Germany and had married a German woman, so that language seemd to suit; and the word we chose means "to soar."

I am not one to think much about an afterlife of any particular kind. But yesterday, sitting beside Bandit as he sighed and let go of his happy life, I did remember that the last photograph of my son...which I found in my camera after his death in 1995...was of him laughing and holding that wiggly, ungainly still-a-puppy during a visit he made to us the month before he died.

So...in a child's picture-book sort of way...it is sweet to think of the two of them soaring together now. Past the flower gardens. Over the fence. Leaping and bounding. Beyond the surly bonds of earth.

Tags: Untagged