

TRAVELING ROSE

You'd told me about your journeys. . . .
Swarms of push-pin markers peppered your map of Earth:
Places your soul-mate and you had visited together.
Retired teacher, you weren't the childless woman they thought,
But mother of thousands, and grandmother, too,
And always planning the next voyage.

You came to prayer first, of all the Village,
When we began to meet before the service,
And came one day asking prayer for your trip:
"As I go to Colorado for my family reunion."
We prayed, and you went, with a clean bill of health.

But that day when, short-of-breath from walking,
You heard the last sermon you would hear from me,
I worried about your condition; but not you. . .
No, you were looking forward to another cruise soon.
But you hesitated, Rose, and had us wondering awhile.
Would you go? You had me thinking you would stay.

But I knew how you loved to travel.
So, I was certain I would get to say good-bye,
Sure that I would see you off this afternoon.
But when I got there, God's plane had left the hospital,
Soaring away with you waving farewell to us all.
And I was left staring up into fresh, clear, blue skies
That had been a little overcast earlier this morning.

— *David L. Hatton, 2/2/1997*