

Mercy Story Ten – October

“Salve Regina, Mater misericordiae! Vita, dulcedo, et spes nostra, Salve!”

“Welcome, O Queen! Mother of Mercy! Our Life, our Sweetness, and our Hope! Welcome!”

He woke up in the morning happy, as usual. He swung his legs out over the side of the bed, made the sign of the Cross, and said, “In the Name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit.” But when he tried to stand up, something was wrong with his legs. He reached down and massaged them with his hand. There was no feeling in either leg from mid-calf on down.

“Thank you, Lord, for 96 years of perfect service from these legs,” he said, rubbing them hard.

He struggled to his feet and staggered to the bathroom. He washed up, brushed his teeth, and shuffled his way back to the bedroom, dizzy and weak. Somehow he managed to get dressed.

“Dear Lord, today’s the day, isn’t it.”

His doctor had told him what he might expect, with his heart in the condition it was in. He had said to phone 911 right away when it happened and get to the hospital. They would make him comfortable. He would be with friends.

Instead, he phoned his son, doing his best to sound upbeat. He invited him to drop by for coffee sometime during the day and just to walk right on in when he got there. The door would be open, maybe even ajar. Then he jotted him a note and set it in the middle of the bare table.

The feeling in his legs was creeping up towards his knees, and his hands were going numb even though it was a warm summer day. Then, instead of dialing 911 he mustered all his strength and made it out the door. He gave a special whistle and, as always, Blaze trotted over towards him and positioned herself in front of the stoop he had built with a railing to help him mount her.

Thank God, the stoop was high and Blaze was not. He dragged himself up the stoop, mostly with his arms, pulled his right leg up and over her back, and fell into place, his chest resting against her neck and mane and his arms dangling on either side.

“One last ride, Old Girl. Not very far. Just over to Cathedral Grove. That’s where I want to be when the angels come.”

Responding to his slightest instructions by hand or by voice, Blaze slowly made her way down the path, into the paddock, out the far gate, and into Cathedral Grove. There were the big old poplars, standing tall and swaying gently in the breeze, their green crowns veiling the blue sky.

“Perfect,” was all he said as he tumbled down from her back onto the soft ground and rolled over onto his back. He lay there gazing at the sky through the trees. Blaze stood watch beside him.

All at once, his eyes glowed brightly! **“Salve Regina, Mater misericordiae!”** And he was gone.