

A TRIBUTE

Sara Beth Shipps McClelland

To the man who four score and seven rabbits ago brought forth his shotgun and a few other possessions into the Kentucky hills from the Delaware valley . . .

To the man of whom it was once remarked by two elderly ladies passing by the parsonage yard and seeing a man dressed in very ragged old clothes hard at work with his gardening tools, "I don't see how the minister can afford to hire a gardener," not recognizing that the tattered man and the well-dressed preacher in their pulpit on Sunday were one and the same . . .

To the man who had his bacon swiped from his plate because he prayed too long over it and his toddler nephew's hunger was greater than his patience . . .

To the man who always planted things to grow forever, no matter where he might go . . .

To the man whose grandchildren have full confidence in him that he can fix absolutely anything, including a glass shattered into a million pieces and a broken automated car wash . . .

To the man whose friendship with Thomas Merton often caused me to wonder who would convert whom to what . . .

To the man who used to stand up waiting at the door with a fly swatter in his hand for his daughter to return home from a date . . .

To the man who ran in the Penn relays and whose granddaughter helped train an Olympic gold medal marathon champion . . .

To the man who filled our home with touches of warmth and love in the form of antique furniture carefully repaired and refinished . . .

To the man who asked me every night of my life for seventeen years, "Did you brush your teeth and say your prayers?" . . .

To the man with whom I spent half my life, who walked along the Atlantic and Delaware coasts with me and talked and who let me go—free—to be me . . .

To the man of whom and to whom there are 2,000 things to say, someday, but his grandchildren are in another part of the house breaking up more things for him to mend . . .