

THE TIDY GRAVE

A one-and-a-half-minute monologue

By JANE CAFARELLA

MARY – 40s–80s, is at the graveside of her recently deceased husband, polishing the headstone furiously.

There! That's better.

She places a small vase of flowers in front of the headstone and sits back, exhausted.

It's the best I could do. The roses all had blackspot. I mixed up the bi-carb solution, like you used to, but there were so many roses and so many black spots!

She is overcome.

Oh, I can't believe you're not here!

The other day, when the air con wouldn't work, I called your name and waited for you to walk into the room to tell me I'd pressed the wrong button.

I thought you were in the garden. I'd completely forgotten! And when I remembered....

She covers her face with her hands.

Every time I hear the wire door open I think it's you...coming home.

But mostly it's just a package being delivered – or a neighbour, checking in.

“Just seeing how you are,” they say, and they sit in your chair and talk about nothing...

Beat

Nothing...

So, I come here... it's important to keep things tidy. It's a lovely view. Sometimes I bring a picnic.

Then I go home and put on your dressing gown, and sit in your chair, and wrap my arms around myself.

I don't hear the wire door...

I hear you ...coming in from the garden with the last of the summer roses ...*(softly mimicking her husband's voice)*... “Just seeing how you are.”

197 spoken words

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