Long Life, Green Burial

for George E. P. Box, statistician (1919–2013)

ROBIN CHAPMAN

Ramshackle contraption rumbling along,
a plank on wagon wheels, a shroud
of unbleached linen with six straps
and your grandsons and sons and friends
trundling your body into the woods
where the chickadees sing
their courting songs and Claire reads
you her poem and the frozen ground,
already opened, receives you, lowered,
with effort, into the earth—
not Alice's rabbit hole but a deeper one,
your rainbowed hat tossed in last
by a grandson and then we shovel
back the dirt and walk through the cold
for coffee and lime bars—another day
we'll celebrate your life, how you transformed
work to play and plain talk to skits
and colleagues to friends and told us
all models are wrong but some are useful
and left us advice in Cole Porter's lyrics:
experiment! As, even now, you did.

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