

Regular as Clockwork

by [David Wiener](#) (May 2025)



The Tomb (Ernst Stückelberg, 1891)

"Oh, look at that."

"Yeah."

The receptionist and the grounds man were taking in the view of Daffodil Hill through the big office window.

"Every week," the receptionist said.

"Some of 'em are like that," said the grounds man, "they never get over it. Can't."

They watched a short middle-aged woman walking past Ivy Place and Elks Rest; she slowed as she moved along the stones in Section L and came to a stop in front of a large teardrop morning-rose granite marker at the very edge of Arbor Vitae.

"Widow Hanley, regular as clockwork," the receptionist said.

"Sad," the grounds man said, "she's still young enough."

"Boy, you just never stop, do you?"

"I will when I'm dead, yeah," the grounds man said. "I might wander over and have a nice chat with her."

The receptionist stared at her screen and shook her head slowly. "Not if you want to keep your job you won't," she said.

The widow Hanley knelt in front of the teardrop-shaped morning rose granite stone; it didn't matter that it had rained earlier that day and her skirt would get muddy. She didn't notice.

She didn't notice the fluffy clouds in the sky, or the boy chasing a little dog around the gravestones.

The boy's mother ran over to him, took his hand, and whistled for the dog.

"See that lady there?" she whispered to her son. "She's sad for someone, maybe praying. Let's make sure we don't disturb her..." And she led the boy and his little dog away, past a freshly-dug grave where workers were setting up folding chairs for a ceremony later in the day. The backhoe had been moved off to a discreet distance and they would assemble the

lowering device very soon.

Maintenance and refurbishing had been completed on the gold Bethesda Fountain. The irrigation engineer opened up all the valves at the base and the air was filled with the tranquil sounds of plashing and gurgling but the widow didn't notice that, either.

Stands of yew and cypress ("trees of eternal life") cast swaying shadows over her as she knelt, motionless, before the stone.

The stone read:

Thomas Hanley, 1955 – 2012

Father, Son, Brother

In Heaven – Loved and Missed

It was carved in Cheltenham Gothic with "Lover's Hearts" cut into the upper right of the stone.

Mrs. Hanley's hands were rock-steady as she set her little floral arrangement on top of her husband's grave.

Mrs. Hanley was crying; she shut her eyes tightly and thought, "I'd do it again ... I wish I could do it again so I could make it hurt more. I hate you."

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David Wiener has written cover, feature, and interview

articles for various performing arts magazines including *American Cinematographer*, *Producers Guild Journal*, *Cahiers du Cinema*, and *The Journal of the Royal Photographic Society of Great Britain*. His plays have been produced in London, India, Canada, Australia, Mexico, and the U.S. and have been published three times in the Smith & Kraus “Best Plays” one-act anthology series. He In 2007, he completed a Literary Internship with La Jolla Playhouse and went on to work as that theatre’s Dramaturgy Associate during the 07-08 season.

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