

Organizing Life's Clutter

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Rattling back the lid of my antique roll-top desk,
I stared in dismay.
Hidden before, my office chaos now lay exposed to any passerby.
Rolling back that oaken cover
had revealed piles of papers,
student essays abandoned until another day,
English Journals offering classroom epiphanies,
pass-along books waiting to be read,
newspaper articles clipped for later use.
The debris sprawled across my desktop,
begging for order.

Resigned to reorganizing,
I set to work.
Into one stack after another,
I delved.
Sorting, filing, saving, trashing,
I labored on.

Then,
digging in one deep drawer,
I unearthed snapshots from a family dinner.
I felt Time pause,
and tears filled my eyes.
I examined my husband's face from a year ago.
Gone was the pink from his cheeks,
and only a mist of white hair rested on his head
like the light of an angelic halo.
Eight rounds of chemo had transformed him
into this picture of someone I *almost* didn't know.
Still, as if his world were normal,
he had looked into the camera's eye
and smiled at my sister Frances.

"What a difference!"
I whispered.
In the space of a year,
cancer had played thief, robbing his health,
but medicine—and luck—had ransomed back his life.

Gently, I reburied the photograph
in its pile of clutter and closed the drawer.
Some memories are better undisturbed,
like papers in a pile.
A hurting heart needs time to heal,
must not see life's clutter,
will be free to hope.