

Last will and testament

by [Rodolph Rowe](#) in the [August 17, 2016](#) issue

“The School Sisters of Notre Dame donate brains to Alzheimer’s research.” —*Time* magazine

One morning soon
in Mankato, Minnesota,
Sister Matthia will die,
a glacial calving in the heart of God.

103, she joyfully
shuffles among an eternity of prepared rooms,
and at her passing has consented to be undressed
before the picture windows of the world.

Clothed in the plainsong of never being forgotten,
loving the Lord God with her all,
she has practiced
being a Jerusalem wall,

tucking for more than a century
into the wrinkled gyri of her brain,
the desperate, tightly folded slips of petition
forwarded through her bent obedience to the beyond.

Rare,
illuminated book of prayer, this quiet mind
welcomes a final harvest.
Weighed, sectioned, photographed,

her wafered flesh
like a lifted host in the researcher’s hands,
shot with light.