

RESPICE FINEM

Juleigh Howard-Hobson

A thin wooden fence, runs—fallen in and
Rotted—with splintered pieces scattered on
Broken stones, and weeds. Two upright posts stand
In derelict attention as if they,
In this manner, can somehow countermand
The horror of neglect and long decay.

Loved ones were left here, to mould and decay
Beneath headstones carved with names and dates and
Information designed to countermand
The loss of who they were when they passed on,
(The loss of every single thing that they
Were and did). Now the old stones—broken—stand

Mutely for those who may no longer stand.
Those who were left to rankle and decay
By persons, loved ones more alive than they,
Who buried them here, to slumber on and
Then left them here as the years rolled on.
And nothing can be done to countermand

The harsh toll of years. Try to countermand
As much as you wish, the effects still stand—
Nothing can be done to roll back time. On
It rolls, onward to the end and to decay,
Onward to the loss of everything. And
We shall, ourselves, be as lost. Just as they

Are left, in this neglected place, as they
Are left without a hope of countermand
To stem the process, we will be left. And
Surely we too shall come to understand
The erasure of ourselves. Deft decay
Will leave little of us to carry on

The same way there is little of them. On
Ward goes time and onward go we. As they
Are now, so we will also be. Decay
Councils no brook, no stop, no countermand.
No matter how strong our own headstones stand
One day they will break, taking the names and

Dates carved on them. Despite the countermand
That they must last they will not always stand
Above us and outlast the last decay.

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