

In Memory of William Ormond Deaver, Jr.

Ali Shehzad Zaidi¹

We dedicate this special issue of *Theory in Action* to a scholar and friend. Bill Deaver contributed frequently to this journal from the very year of its inception in 2008. Bill spoke and wrote clearly and honestly. Many pride themselves on having common sense, but Bill was among the few who had it. He despised cant, corporate palaver, and the ponderous academic jargon that plagues our discipline, literary criticism. He patiently read multiple drafts of my typo-ridden and error-laden articles despite the tedium involved. His comments and insights, like those of our mutual friend, Jay Corwin, improved my scholarship. Although he cannot comment, Bill nonetheless shapes this piece in ways unbeknownst to me. I share these memories along with excerpts from our lengthy correspondence in the hope that it may restore him to life in the hearts of those who read these words.

Bill and I became friends at the University Virginia. We were classmates in Professor Donald McGrady's Spanish Golden Age class in fall 1985, our first semester in the Spanish doctoral program. Bill was a native Virginian from Richmond. I was an expatriate American who had grown up in Mexico and who had recently completed a master's in English literature in Pakistan. Despite our different backgrounds, we had much in common. We were former English literature majors whose restlessness led us to Hispanic literature. We would later teach in public schools before becoming university professors. As scholars, we began publishing late compared to our peers; and we hit our stride writing articles rather than books. And our lives were immeasurably enriched by our friend Jay Corwin.

During our first semester at UVA, Bill invited me over for lunch at his apartment. He strummed a guitar as we discussed life and literature. I shared with Bill some poems and translations by Daud Kamal, my former English professor at the University of Peshawar. Although I succeeded in getting a few published in two Virginia-based literary

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