

Just Like Joseph of Arimathea 2025

Just like Joseph of Arimathea, Raymond was from somewhere. Raymond of Lorneville. And like Arimathea for Joseph, Lorneville would always be a part of Raymond, a moniker he couldn't shake, an extra organ in his body that went with him his whole life and influenced so much of what he did and what he thought. A one street fishing village with fog so thick some days that you couldn't see the house across the road, even in July. With families inter-marrying often and as a result you were related to most everyone in town which strengthened ties but also accentuated rifts of which there were many. Raymond of Lorneville. Introverted, intelligent, judgemental, a strong leader and organizer. Successful but unsatisfied. A pleaser, keen to see others happy but unhappy himself. My father.

Raymond of Lorneville was a "good and upright man", the same as was said of Joseph of Arimathea. He sought justice for those that were deserving, such as the relatives and neighbours from little Lorneville, designated for land appropriation by the New Brunswick government of the day in the 1970s, to make way for nuclear energy facility. It would have been an act of destruction, the utter removal of a village and all that it had represented for more than a century, the hardships it had withstood: two world wars that saw local boys leave their homes for the greatest unknown, a depression that instilled a lifelong fear of scarcity, and vicious storms on the bay of Fundy which in those days were unpredictable, and some of which took the lives of fathers, sons ... men unable to return to the safety of the harbour and who would tie themselves to the structure of their fishing boats in the hope that their bodies would be found and could be buried in SeaView cemetery. Yes, the cemetery that also was designated for destruction. Lorneville was to be wiped away. Raymond was not in agreement. He took up the battle and faced down the government that had expected little opposition. They were wrong. In the end Lorneville was largely spared, only a small portion was taken. The village of Lorneville was grateful that Raymond was one of theirs, even after years of living in Ontario.

He was a complicated man but in truth, every person is complicated. Or dull. Raymond was not dull. The complications he called his own made him difficult to know, difficult to approach, even for those with whom he spent every day under the same roof, passing in the hallway, sitting at the dinner table where the biggest vocal contributor was the person delivering the news on the radio. Difficult to see the man. I wept with emotion the few times I spoke about him publicly, out of respect for the man but deep down I'm not sure if the emotion was specifically for Raymond. It was more for what fatherhood means, an opinion passed down and accepted largely unquestioned, at least for a time. My true sadness however is in what fatherhood ultimately didn't mean between he and I: connection, honest revelation, vulnerability, kindness. Respect and admiration were present in our relationship, to be sure, and I believe it passed both ways. Was that enough? No. It wasn't then. It isn't now. It has been more than 30 years since he died and I can say definitively that it is not.

I dream about Raymond of Lorneville from time to time, from what I can remember as I emerge from sleep. Strangely the theme recurs and it involved him returning after being dead for many years. Despite the questions of 'where have you been this long period of time?', he is simply present again, and he is silent. Raymond never speaks. In my dreams he just exists, physically stands with us and observes, the prodigal father welcomed home. The respect and admiration rekindled. But as in life, anything more is lacking, Raymond is at arm's length physically and emotionally, as he always was. He never

communicates. He watches but he does not speak. And apart from dreams, this whole time Raymond of Lorneville has been *in* Lorneville, where he was returned, buried beneath the fog-kissed ground, my mother Winifred of Ottawa now beside him. I am of Woodbridge, and though I am old, I am now an orphan, with parents barely understood and now gone, and this is something that feels like a hollow in me, and echo of what is lost, tears in its place. Often tears.

Raymond is gone. Winifred too. Their tombstones bear record that what remains is in Lorneville, but I choose not to visit. That's complicated too and not important. Their memory rather comes in other moments. Conversations with my sisters. Photos around the house. Dates that will never be forgotten. Small traditions that grow more important the older I become. Interactions with my own children and thinking of how alike or unlike Raymond of Lorneville that I want to be.