



Blair Birmelin

March 21, 2020

BIRMELIN- Blair Tillisch

On March 21st, Blair Tillisch Birmelin died peacefully at home in Leonia, New Jersey, after bravely living with cancer for many years. Her devoted family was by her side through the final days.

An author and teacher, she generously imparted to others her love of literature and art, sharing her discriminating insights into both.

Born April, 23 1937 in Rochester, Minnesota, to Jan Henrik Tillisch, M.D. and Marjorie Townsend Tillisch. She graduated from Smith College in 1959 with highest honors in Art History and studied at the Yale University School of Art in 1959-60, later continuing her studies during four years residence in London and Rome, 1960-64. On returning home this country she wrote critical reviews on art and literature for publications such as Art in America, The Washington Post and The Nation. She published two well reviewed novels, "The Superintendent" and "The Dead Woman's Sister," as well as writing many short stories and plays. She taught expository writing at Montclair State University for several years and later

had great pleasure in guiding a book group for more than 12 years. Blair was a vibrant, strong personality with a powerful intellectual honesty and directness. Her vigilant concern for her family was deeply felt by all. An extraordinary woman, she will be sorely missed.

Robert, her husband of 59 years, her sons Lucas and Nicholas and granddaughter Anika lovingly cared for Blair during the difficult last days. Home aide, Marina Choperena, was beyond kind and indispensably helpful during Blair's time of illness. Also surviving her is a brother, Jan H. Tillisch M.D. of Los Angeles.

Blair wanted no funeral service, instead requesting that there be a party in celebration of her life to be held at some time after her death. Such an event will be announced at a later date.