

Magic Wanda

Mother called Wanda, a woman in New York.
"Wanda's a healer," she said,
"She's healed people who were in trouble."
I'm naturally a skeptic, but I let my mother be.
I mean, it's her phone bill--
as long as it's not Psychic Friends.

Wanda's part of a prayer circuit.
People in need call Wanda--she hears their stories,
then passes them onto the circuit.
The people on the circuit pray for those needy,
then, soon, the needy can feel relieved.
All those caring circueteers, all their dialed-in benevolence,
really helps, as my mother testified.

I decided to play a little joke.

I prank-called Wanda.
I told her that my mother fell ill,
and that her prayer circuit failed.
My mother had died.
I faked sobs and threw accusations.
I was really cruel.
Wanda believed me.
She sobbed too.

The next day, my mother showed me the strangest thing.
It was a card, addressed to the family:
*"With deepest sympathies
upon the passing of your mother.
--W."*

Mother said "Grandma's surgery was successful,
I don't know what they're talking about.
Whoever it was, rang once, left it in the door,
then took off in a taxi. I tried to flag it down, but--"
She suddenly turned, and walked to the kitchen.

I heard the lift of the receiver, and many buttons pushed.
Mother waited in stillness.
Then, with an exhalation of breath, she hung up,
without a word.