

Medicine, Law, and Entertainment."

*"I see you also have four great grandchildren.
Two great granddaughters, and two great grandsons."
I say, "You keep very good records."*

*"I have to," says the Voice. "People keep
coming and going all the time. You've been pretty
busy yourself. After college you started writing
and you never stopped."*

*"That's because writing isn't a profession; it's a
disease. And it's accompanied by a disease that's even worse,
rewriting."*

*"I know all about that," says the Voice. "You're not
the first writer to knock on my gate. But at least
you were successful. Many writers are not."*

*"That's true. I've been well-rewarded with plenty of money for me,
for my family, and for my many charities."*

*"A good life I would say," says the Voice,
"With plenty of awards and honors."*

"And plenty of hard knocks from critics," I reply.

*"That comes with the territory," says the Voice. "But you've had
lots of compensation. Not just money; thousands of fan letters
you've received from people all over the world,
thanking you for entertaining them
with words that brought them a smile or a
laugh, sometimes when they needed it the most."*

*Then the Voice continues apologetically, "I
didn't mean to keep you waiting outside the gate. Go ahead: Ask.
Ask what they all want to know when they knock at my gate:
Am I going to Heaven or not?"*

*"That's what I was going to ask when I got here," I say.
then I suddenly realized something when we talked.
Heaven is where I've been since the day I was born."*

A fond farewell,

Shirley Schwartz