

## FAREWELL POEMS

### Remember

Remember me when I am gone away,  
gone far away into the silent land;  
when you can no more hold me by the hand,  
nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.  
Remember me when no more, day by day  
you tell me of our future that you planned:  
only remember me; you understand  
it will be late to counsel them or pray.  
Yet if you should forget me for a while  
and afterwards remember, do not grieve:  
For if the darkness and corruption leave  
a vestige of the thoughts I once had,  
better by far you should forget and smile  
than that you should remember and be sad.

Christina Rossetti

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### On Emily's Father's Death

In truth: from sad a good will sometimes grow,  
though how it sprouts and blooms we never know;  
tend now to all your evanescent pains—  
in time from them one gathers greater grains.

samBdavis

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### Sonnet LXXI

No longer mourn for me when I am dead  
than you shall hear the surly sullen bell  
Give warning to the world that I am fled  
from this vile world, with vilest worms to dwell:  
Nay, if you read this line, remember not  
the hand that writ it; for I love you so,  
that I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot,  
if thinking on me then should make you woe.  
O, if, I say, you look upon this verse  
when I perhaps compounded am with clay,  
do not so much as my poor name rehearse,  
but let your love even with my life decay;  
lest the wise world should look into your moan  
and mock you with me after I am gone.

William Shakespeare

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### I'd Like to Think

I'd like to think when life is done  
that I had filled a needed post,  
that here and there I'd paid my fare  
with more than idle talk and boast;  
that I had taken gifts divine,  
the breath of life and manhood fine  
and tried to use them now and then  
in service for my fellow man.

Guest

Paul Mott, Authorized Celebrant  
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### The Last Invocation

At the last, tenderly,  
from the walls of the powerful fortress'd house,  
from the clasp of the knitted locks,  
from the keep of the well closed doors,  
let me be wafted.  
Let me glide noiselessly forth;  
with the key of softness unlock the locks— with a whisper,  
set open the doors O soul.  
Tenderly— be not impatient,  
(strong is your hold O mortal flesh,  
strong is your hold O love.)

Walt Whitman

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### **Wild Swans at Coole (final verse)**

Unwearied still, lover by lover,  
they paddle in the cold  
companionable streams or climb the air;  
their hearts have not grown old;  
passion or conquest, wander where they will,  
attend upon them still.  
But now they drift on the still water,  
mysterious, beautiful;  
among what rushes will they build,  
by what lake's edge or pool  
delight men's eyes when I awake someday  
to find they have flown away.

Yeats

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### **The Lake Isle of Innisfree**

I will arise and go now, and go to Innisfree,  
and a small cabin built there, of clay and wattles made:  
nine bean rows will I have there, a hive for the honey-bee,  
and live alone in the bee-loud glade.  
And I will have some peace there, for peace comes dropping slow,  
dropping from the veils of the morning to where the cricket sings;  
there midnight's all a glimmer, and noon a purple glow,  
and evening full of the linnet's wings.  
I will arise and go now, for always night and day  
I hear lake water lapping with low sounds by the shore;  
while I stand on the roadway, upon the pavements grey,  
I hear it in the deep heart's core.

Yeats

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### **From Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam**

The moving finger writes, and have writ  
moves on: nor all thy piety or wit  
shall lure it back to cancel half a line,  
nor all thy tears wash out a word of it.

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### **From The Prophet on Death**

Your fear of death is but the trembling  
of the shepherd when he stands before

the king whose hand is to be laid upon him in honor.  
Is the shepherd not joyful beneath  
his trembling, that he shall wear the mark of the king?  
Yet is he not more mindful of his trembling  
For what is it to die but to stand naked  
in the wind and to melt in the sun?  
And what is it to cease breathing,  
but to free the breath from its restless  
tides, that it may rise and expand and seek God unencumbered?  
Only when you drink from the river  
of silence shall you indeed sing.  
And when you have reached the mountain top,  
then you shall begin to climb.  
And when the earth shall claim your limbs,  
then you shall truly dance.

**Kahil Gibran**

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### **Do Not Weep For Me**

Do not weep for me, for I have lived...  
I have joined my hand with my fellows' hands,  
to leave the planet better than I found it.  
Do not weep for me, for I have loved and been loved by  
my family, by those I loved who loved me back  
for I never knew a stranger, only friends.  
Do not weep for me.  
When you feel the ocean spray upon your face,  
I am there.  
When your heart beats faster at the dolphin's leaping grace,  
I am there.  
When you reach out to touch another's heart,  
as now I touch God's face,  
I am there.  
Do not weep for me. I am not gone.

**Poet unknown (read for Michael Landon )**

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### **Do Not Go Gently Into That Good Night**

Do not go gently into that good night,  
old age should burn and rave at close of day;  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.  
Though wise men at their end know dark is right,  
because their words had forked no lightning they  
do not go gently into that good night.  
Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright  
their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,  
rage, rage against the dying of the light.  
Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,  
and learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,  
do not go gently into that good night.  
Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight  
blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,  
Rage, rage, against the dying of the light.  
And you, my father, there on that sad height,  
Curse, bless me now with your fierce tears, I pray.  
Do not go gentle into that good night.  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Dylan Thomas (read for Richard Burton)

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### **Funeral Blues**

Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone,  
prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone,  
Silence the pianos and with muffled drum  
bring out the coffin, let the mourners come.  
Let aeroplanes circle moaning overhead  
scribbling on the sky the message He is Dead,  
put crepe bows round the white necks of the public doves,  
let the traffic policemen wear black cotton gloves.  
He was my north, my south, my east and west,  
my working week and my Sunday best,  
my noon, my midnight, my talk my song;  
I thought that love would last forever: I was wrong.  
The stars are not wanted now; put out every one:  
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun;  
pour away the ocean and sweep up the woods:  
For nothing now can ever come to any good.

W. F. Auden (read in the film "Four weddings and a Funeral")

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## **Poems for a Farewell for Spouse**

**Remember**

Remember me when I am gone away,  
gone far away into the silent land;  
when you can no more hold me by the hand,  
nor I half turn to go yet turning stay.  
Remember me when no more, day by day  
you tell me of our future that you planned:  
only remember me; you understand  
it will be late to counsel them or pray.  
Yet if you should forget me for a while  
and afterwards remember, do not grieve:  
For if the darkness and corruption leave  
a vestige of the thoughts I once had,  
better by far you should forget and smile  
than that you should remember and be sad.

**Christina Rossetti**

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than you shall hear the surly sullen bell  
Give warning to the world that I am fled  
from this vile world, with vilest worms to dwell:  
nay, if you read this line, remember not  
the hand that writ it; for I love you so,  
that I in your sweet thoughts would be forgot,  
if thinking on me then should make you woe.  
O, if, I say, you look upon this verse  
when I perhaps compounded am with clay,  
do not so much as my poor name rehearse,  
but let your love even with my life decay;  
lest the wise world should look into your moan  
and mock you with me after I am gone.

**William Shakespeare**

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I have joined my hand with my fellows' hands,  
to leave the planet better than I found it.  
Do not weep for me, for I have loved and been loved by  
my family, by those I loved who loved me back  
for I never knew a stranger, only friends.  
Do not weep for me.  
When you feel the ocean spray upon your face,  
I am there.  
When your heart beats faster at the dolphin's leaping grace,  
I am there.  
When you reach out to touch another's heart,  
as now I touch God's face,  
I am there.  
Do not weep for me. I am not gone.

**Poet unknown (read for Michael Landon )**

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### **The Widower**

For a season there must be pain—  
For a little, little space  
I shall lose the sight of her face,

Take back the old life again  
While She is at rest in her place.  
For a season this pain must endure,  
For a little. Little while  
I shall sigh more often than smile  
Till Time shall work me a cure,  
And the pitiful days beguile.  
For a season we must be apart,  
For a little length of years,  
Till my life's last hour nears,  
And above the beat of my heart,  
I hear Her voice in my ears.  
But I shall not understand –  
Being set on some later love,  
Shall not know her for whom I strove,  
Till she reach me forth her hand,  
Saying, "Who but I have the right?"  
And out a troubled night  
Shall draw me safe to the land.

Rudyard Kipling

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## Poems for a Parent's Farewell

### A Cut Finger

A cut finger  
is numb before it bleeds,  
it bleeds before it hurts,  
it hurts until it begins to heal,  
it forms a scab and itches  
until finally, the scab is gone  
and a small scar is left  
where once there was a wound.  
Grief is the deepest wound  
you ever had.  
Like a cut finger,  
it goes through stages,  
and leaves a scar.

Poet Unknown • Submitted by: Alicia Wells, a young girl trying to deal with mother's death

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### In Memory of My Mother

I do not think of you lying in the wet clay  
of a Monaghan graveyard; I see  
you walking down a lane among the poplars  
on your way to the station, or happily

Going to second Mass on a summer Sunday—  
You meet me and you say:  
“Don’t forget to see about the cattle— “  
Among your earthiest words the angels stray.  
And I think of you walking along  
a headland of green oats in June,  
so full of repose, so rich with life—  
And I see us meeting at the end of town  
on a fair day by accident, after  
the bargains are all made and we can walk  
together through the shops and stalls and markets  
free in the oriental streets of thought.  
O you are not lying in the wet clay,  
for it is a harvest evening now and we  
are piling up the rocks against the moonlight  
and you smile up at us— eternally.

Patrick Kavanagh

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### On Emily’s Father’s Death

In truth: from sad a good will sometimes grow,  
though how it sprouts and blooms we never know;  
tend now to all your evanescent pains—  
in time from them one gathers greater grains.

samBdavis

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### Do Not Weep For Me

Do not weep for me, for I have lived...  
I have joined my hand with my fellows’ hands,  
to leave the planet better than I found it.  
Do not weep for me, for I have loved and been loved by  
my family, by those I loved who loved me back  
for I never knew a stranger, only friends.  
Do not weep for me.  
When you feel the ocean spray upon your face,  
I am there.  
When your heart beats faster at the dolphin’s leaping grace,  
I am there.  
When you reach out to touch another’s heart,  
as now I touch God’s face,  
I am there.  
Do not weep for me. I am not gone.

Poet unknown (read for Michael Landon)

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## Poems For Child’s Farewell

### Epitaph for a Child

Here, freed from pain, secure from misery, lies  
a child, the darling of his parents’ eyes:  
A gentler lamb never sported on the plain.  
A fairer flower will never bloom again:

few were the days allotted to his breath;  
now let him sleep in peace his night of death.

Thomas Gray

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### Second Sowing

For whom  
The milk ungiven in the breast  
When the child is gone?  
For whom  
The love locked up in the heart  
That is left alone?  
That golden yield  
Split sod once, overflowed an August field,  
Threshed out in pain upon September's floor,  
Now hoarded high in barns, a sterile store.  
Break down the bolted door;  
Rip open, spread and pour  
The grain upon the barren ground  
Wherever crack in clod is found.  
There is no harvest for the heart alone:  
The seed of love must be  
Eternally  
Resown.

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## Poems for Farewells When an Unexpected Death

### Do Not Weep For Me

Do not weep for me, for I have lived...  
I have joined my hand with my fellows' hands,  
to leave the planet better than I found it.  
Do not weep for me, for I have loved and been loved by  
my family, by those I loved who loved me back  
for I never knew a stranger, only friends.  
Do not weep for me.  
When you feel the ocean spray upon your face,  
I am there.  
When your heart beats faster at the dolphin's leaping grace,  
I am there.  
When you reach out to touch another's heart,  
as now I touch God's face,  
I am there.  
Do not weep for me. I am not gone.

Poet unknown (read for Michael Landon )

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### Funeral Blues

Stop all the clocks, cut off the telephone,  
prevent the dog from barking with a juicy bone,  
Silence the pianos and with muffled drum  
bring out the coffin, let the mourners come.  
Let aeroplanes circle moaning overhead  
scribbling on the sky the message He is Dead,  
put crepe bows round the white necks of the public doves,  
let the traffic policemen wear black cotton gloves.  
He was my north, my south, my east and west,  
my working week and my Sunday best,

my noon, my midnight, my talk my song;  
I thought that love would last forever: I was wrong.  
The stars are not wanted now; put out every one:  
Pack up the moon and dismantle the sun;  
pour away the ocean and sweep up the woods:  
For nothing now can ever come to any good.

W. F. Auden (read in the film "Four weddings and a Funeral")

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### **Do Not Go Gently Into That Good Night**

Do not go gently into that good night,  
old age should burn and rave at close of day;  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.  
Though wise men at their end know dark is right,  
because their words had forked no lightning they  
do not go gently into that good night.  
Good men, the last wave by, crying how bright  
their frail deeds might have danced in a green bay,  
rage, rage against the dying of the light.  
Wild men who caught and sang the sun in flight,  
and learn, too late, they grieved it on its way,  
do not go gently into that good night.  
Grave men, near death, who see with blinding sight  
blind eyes could blaze like meteors and be gay,  
Rage, rage, against the dying of the light.  
And you, my father, there on that sad height,  
Curse, bless me now with your fierce tears, I pray.  
Do not go gentle into that good night.  
Rage, rage against the dying of the light.

Dylan Thomas (read for Richard Burton)

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### **From Berck-Plage**

Now the washed sheets fly in the sun,  
The pillow cases are sweetening.  
It is a blessing, it is a blessing:  
The long coffin of soap-colored oak,  
The curious bearers and the raw date  
Engraving itself in silver with marvelous calm.

Sylvia Plath

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### **Where the Sidewalk Ends**

There is a place where the sidewalk ends  
And before the street begins  
And there the grass grows soft and white.  
And there the sun burns crimson bright,  
And there the moon-bird rests from his flight  
To cool in the peppermint wind.  
Let us leave this place where the smoke blows black  
And the dark street winds and bends.  
Past the pits where the asphalt flowers grow  
We shall walk with a walk that is measured and slow,

And watch where the chalk white arrows go,  
To the place where the sidewalk ends.  
Yes, we'll walk with a walk that is measured and slow,  
And we'll go where the chalk white arrows go,  
For the children, they mark, and the children, they know  
The place where the sidewalk ends.

Shel Silverstein • From *Where the Sidewalk Ends* • Harper Collins Publishers, NY • Copyright: 1974 Evil Eye Music, Inc.

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### **You Came to Me**

you came to me  
and woke me in the night  
small disheveled figure tumbled out  
with dragging sheets  
hurrying to  
quit the sight of monsters and their  
inquisitive snout of that  
intrusive stranger  
death  
you crept into my bed  
and shivering curled against me  
your firm blossoming cheek  
beneath my hand  
I felt your round knees  
digging comfort from my  
warm belly  
the fiends and shaped then  
leaped  
from your narrow  
wishbone breast  
you after all had  
cried sanctuary  
and landed fully operative  
into my dreams  
and in my dreams  
there was nothing ranged  
father now mother now  
god  
to annul that  
dark decree

Nancy Dingman Watson

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## **Poems for a Farewell After a Long Illness**

### ***From The Prophet***

Your fear of death is but the trembling  
of the shepherd when he stands before  
the king whose hand is to be laid upon him  
in honor.  
Is the shepherd not joyful beneath  
his trembling, that he shall wear the mark  
of the king?  
Yet is he not more mindful of his trembling  
For what is it to die but to stand naked  
in the wind and to melt in the sun?  
And what is it to cease breathing,

but to free the breath from its restless  
tides, that it may rise and expand and seek God unencumbered?  
Only when you drink from the river  
of silence shall you indeed sing.  
And when you have reached the mountain top,  
then you shall begin to climb.  
And when the earth shall claim your limbs,  
then you shall truly dance.

Kahil Gibran

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### **Do Not Weep For Me**

Do not weep for me, for I have lived...  
I have joined my hand with my fellows' hands,  
to leave the planet better than I found it.  
Do not weep for me, for I have loved and been loved by  
my family, by those I loved who loved me back  
for I never knew a stranger, only friends.  
Do not weep for me.  
When you feel the ocean spray upon your face,  
I am there.  
When your heart beats faster at the dolphin's leaping grace,  
I am there.  
When you reach out to touch another's heart,  
as now I touch God's face,  
I am there.  
Do not weep for me. I am not gone.

Poet unknown (read for Michael Landon )

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Not every man knows what he shall sing at the end,  
Watching the pier as the ship sails away, or what it will seem like  
When he's held by the sea's roar, motionless, there at the end,  
Or what he shall hope for one it is clear that he'll never go back.  
When the time has passed to prune the rose or caress the cat, when  
The sunset torching the lawn and the full moon icing it down  
No longer appear, not every man knows what he'll discover instead,  
When the weight of the past leans against nothing and the sky.  
Is no more than remembered light, and the stories are suspended in flight,  
Not every man knows what is waiting for him, or what he shall sing  
When the ship he is on slips into darkness, there at the end.

Mark Strand

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### **Poems for African American Farewells**

#### **When Storms Arise**

When storms arise And dark'ning skies  
About me threat'ning lower,  
To Thee, O Lord, I raise mine eyes,  
To Thee my tortured spirit flies  
For solace in that hour.  
The mighty arm  
Will let no harm  
Come near me not befall me;  
The voice shall quiet my alarm,  
When life's great battle waxeth warm—  
No foeman shall appall me.  
Upon they breast  
Secure I rest,  
From sorrow and vexation;

No more by sinful cares oppressed,  
But in they presence ever blest,  
O God of my salvation.

**Go Down, Moses • Paul Laurence Dunvar (1895) • Edited by Richard Newman, Crown Publishing Group/Roundtable Press, Inc., NY, 1998 • From Conversations with God—Two Centuries of Prayers by African Americans • By James Melvin Washington, Ph.D.**

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### **Free at Last**

I know my Lord is a man of war;  
He fought my battle at Hell's dark door.  
Satan thought he had me fast;  
I broke his chain and got free at last.  
Free at last, free at last,  
Thank God Almighty, I'm free at last.  
Free at last, free at last,  
Thank God almighty, I'm free at last.  
You can hinder me here, but you cant' hinder me there;  
The Lord in Heaven's going to answer my prayer.  
I went in the valley, but I didn't go to stay;

My soul got happy and I stayed all day.  
From *Go Down, Moses* • Richard Newman, Crown Publishing Group/Roundtable Press, Inc., NY, 1998

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### **The Angels Are Watching Over Me**

All night, all night  
The angels are watching over me.  
All night, all night  
The angels are watching over me.  
Someday Peter and someday Paul,  
The angels are watching over me—  
Ain't but one God made us all,  
The angels are watching over me,  
You get there before I do,  
The angels are matching over me—  
Tell all my friends I'm coming too.  
The angles are watching over me.

From *Go Down, Moses* • Richard Newman, Crown Publishing Group/Roundtable Press, Inc., NY, 1998

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## **Farewell Readings for American Indians**

In the great night my heart will go out,  
Toward me the darkness comes rattling,  
In the great night my heart will go out.  
From the Papago

In *Readings for Remembrance*, Eleanor Munro, • Penguin Books, 2000

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Perchance do we truly live on earth?  
Not forever on earth,  
But briefly here!  
Be it jade, it too will be broken;  
Be it gold, it too will be melted,  
And even the plume of the quetzal decays.  
Not forever on earth,  
But briefly here!  
From the Aztec

In *Readings for Remembrance*, Eleanor Munro • Penguin Books, 2000

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The moon and the year  
Travel and pass away;  
also the day, also the wind.  
Also the flesh passes away  
To the place of its quietness.

From the Maya • In *Readings for Remembrance*, Eleanor Munro • Penguin Books, 2000

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## Poems for Military Farewells

*From A Psalm of Life*

Paul Mott      Page 13 4/08/2015

Lives of great men all remind us  
We can make our lives sublime,  
And, departing, leave behind us  
Footprints on the sands of time.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

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Not every man knows what he shall sing at the end,  
Watching the pier as the ship sails away, or what it will seem like  
When he's held by the sea's roar, motionless, there at the end,  
Or what he shall hope for one it is clear that he'll never go back.  
When the time has passed to prune the rose or caress the cat, when  
The sunset torching the lawn and the full moon icing it down  
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Is no more than remembered light, and the stories are suspended in flight,

Not every man knows what is waiting for him, or what he shall sing  
When the ship he is on slips into darkness, there at the end.

Mark Strand

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I was still thinking of ...boys I knew for whom there had been no difference between war and peace, who had returned from Vietnam so scarred within and without that they couldn't fit into the society they had been sent to defend, boys wounded more by sights and deeds than bullets. At the tip of the hill I sat beneath a sycamore and stared idly across the next valley at the trees and scrub brush on the opposite slope, my thoughts on the folly and inevitability of war.

Stephen Greenleaf

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### A Horseman Passes

A clan gathers at the Camp  
Butler cemetery to bury Bill  
my uncle; many people  
meet among the uniform soldier  
stones standing white about burial  
tents. In life at death we stare  
at the coal hue coffin  
so smooth, so lacquered black  
we can see ourselves in it,  
and cast cold eyes  
at what reflections passing by.  
People mull on the man-pun being  
put under, facing our uncertain  
concerns whether we could have been  
better to him. The minister points  
to the good in Bill we as his  
familiar often overlooked  
in our need to pull down one with less  
to boost our suspected mores,  
and I wonder if he ever felt true  
love in his time, if his Pollock niche  
with my kin was close enough  
to appease the need to be needed  
we all need. I know now  
the origins of burial sadness lie  
in the sounds, in the grave voice  
of preacher prayer  
in solemn soliloquy  
of an Amvet Rep  
and in the uncommon catch  
of breath in mourning  
fighting the foul cry— for  
it's only our relative fears  
that brings to us related tears.

samBdavis