

## WHEN HE DIED

*For the staff at St Wilfrids Hospice*

When he died  
he died like the others

quietly in a dark room  
with a woman at the bed side.

We waited  
while she called his brother,

opened the door  
as he stumbled into the room,

watched from the edge  
as they hugged through a fog

of disbelief.  
We made tea,

pushed the tray  
into the shocked quiet.

They sat on either side of him,  
staring at his unmoving body,

unbelieving. Silent.  
I tiptoed closer

curled my fingers  
around her shoulder,

stroked  
the top of her arm.

Later we sponged his body,  
lifted his white wax limbs

and felt the strong red music  
of the living

spiral out of the window,  
released like a bird

from pain.

