

The Dead

by Philip F. Clark

The dead want you to calm down.
They are quite fine, and don't need
your post-mortem tears, the flowers and veils;
their names mispronounced by preachers.
None of your catechisms will do -- especially
for the children, who know them well and need
no confessional box of secrets to tell
what all of them already knew: this life
is short, or long, depending on hours of mischance
and miscreants. The dead want you to be quiet,
like them, as they watch the ceremonies
you provide, like unforgiven lovers
hoping to make it all right.

