

Speaking to the Dead

by Bill Yarrow

I didn't hear your last words or see your last
eyes. I didn't reach you in time, so I sat by your corpse,
silently saying goodbye. I am in that process,
 not sour, not sweet, that yoked speaking which can't
(because the heart won't let it) utter its whispered
last word, but stutters instead like the awful-eyed
 idiot of love, stroking a hand and thinking it speech.
Nothing pulses now from your cold, dead palm;
No sounds exit, no language leaks.
 You're beyond the infinite weakness of words;
I'm still in their thrall, caught in the thrashing
eloquence of unregistered inarticulate emotion.
 What does death do? It petrifies pain, reifies loss,
installs nothing new, revokes everything old.

