

# 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.

