

# 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.

