

## The Life I Owe

I hope it's raining when I die  
And that the waves are crashing high  
And lightening flashing in the sky.

I'd like to go out with a roar  
Of thunder and a good downpour  
The kind that makes me feel secure

All cozy huddled in my bed  
All tucked about the neck and head  
Even though tomorrow I'll be dead.

Or maybe I should hope for snow.  
Yes, snow might be the way to go.  
An inch, a blizzard... I don't know.

For feeling cozy and secure  
There's nothing better, that's for sure;  
And snow does something even more.

Not only does it make no sound  
Caressing every inch of ground,  
It makes the whole thing feel profound.

It's natural to imagine death  
How one might draw one's final breath  
And what one might surround it with,

What metaphor or simile  
Hyperbole or subtlety  
Might turn it into poetry

Where last lines often are the best  
Illuminating all the rest  
And everyone is so impressed!

And yet I know one can't foresee  
Much less control mortality  
One has to let what will be *be*.

The where and when if *I'd* decide

Would mean the *how* of how I'd died  
Would be determined suicide

Which still, though not, you may agree,  
The sin it maybe used to be  
Is not my kind of poetry.

No, when I die the weather may  
Be nothing but a tired cliché  
And I won't have a thing to say.

If there's to be precipitation  
With interesting interpretation  
It will be none of my creation.

I may die murdered in my sleep  
Or so demented I just keep  
On sinking till I'm six feet deep.

Whatever weather passes through  
Or happens by will have to do.  
No pressure, but it will be you,

You who survive me, looking back...  
The system, if there's one to track  
Much less a meaning to unpack,

Yours to interpret or invent  
Or trace if you can find the scent,  
The pattern, what the whole thing meant,

As if the weather ever stood  
For anything, as if it could  
Mean something meaningful or should.

But meaning comes when it is sought  
The same way poetry is wrought  
With mother lodes of afterthought,

Afterthought and reverie  
Not pro- but retro-actively  
Supplied by anyone but me

Since I, as I've already said,  
Can't help this time since I'll be dead  
No longer lying here in bed

Thinking back and back until  
Things coalesce and there's that thrill  
That *aha* moment, if you will,

When everything all comes together,  
The sound, the meaning and the weather,  
And you could be felled by a feather

When everything you thought you knew  
Turns out to be not only true  
But different somehow, simpler too.

But you... it will be you not me  
Who has the last epiphany  
About *my* life if one's to be.

Me, I'll be dead as I keep saying.  
And rain or shine I won't be weighing  
The pros and cons. I'll be decaying.

Not gasping famous last words though  
Just *giving back the life I owe*  
*To the love that would not let me go.*

*Yielding up the flickering days*  
*I borrowed from the fairer rays*  
*Of the light that followed all my ways.*

Those are stanzas from a song I knew  
When I was young and thought them true.  
The crazy thing is, I still do.

It matters how you say a thing  
And to what truths you choose to cling  
From all those songs we used to sing.

It's not just fun, though. There's a cost.  
For every truth you claim, one's lost.  
I learned that truth from Robert Frost.

If you claim love, you must discard  
Some walls, for starters, which is hard.  
But he said, 'Trust me. I'm a bard.'

And I could name a braver one  
Who never even wrote words down  
Yet with them crumbled laws of stone.  
And he said, 'Trust me. I'm *God's son!*'

Or rather, he called God *our* father  
Who loves us something like a mother  
Which makes *him* something like a brother...

You choose your favorite metaphor.  
I've got to end this one before  
The climate changes even more

And weather is no more the leaven  
That lifts so easily to heaven  
We who don't know what we've been given.

Whatever metaphor you ride  
Or melody on which you glide  
To safety on the other side,  
Let's promise now (however wide  
We land from where we aimed our pride  
And whether we land dignified  
Or mystified or terrified)  
We'll seek each other bleary-eyed  
And share our sagas once we've died.

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