

Bedside Manner

~ upon the passing of my mother

The dying have no sense
of when. Everything is
was, each breath,
a terrible wind.

The light of those they love
gathers like a tempestuous mob
shaking smoking torches
outside the window,

blazes like a hidden sun,
flooding the river of glass
with the searing certainty
of inevitable dawn.

The dying always walk
the other way, forgetting
all paths lead back, like breathing,
the way in is the way out.

I was there when she tumbled
like a flaming magnolia
down the long well of her mind.
I felt the exquisite weightlessness,
then her fear. What happens

at the bottom? She clenched
my hand in hers in mine in hers.
Although she was ashen as a tear of dust,
hollow as the peeled skin of snake,

I asked her if she remembered
the time in temple when her just
fallen father's thick veined hand
squeezed hers squeezing mine.

*He came to tell you
it's all right.* She remembers
to let go. Falls forever.
Nothing is more beautiful.