

Funerals

Words over polished wood;
Songs to distract
Blank eyes from silence, glued
To the brute fact.

Urned ash; mouldering bone;
Hacked rock, wet clay;
Tilted albums of stone
Wearing away.

Garbage, pet after pet
On dumps tossed out;
Shriek of speed to forget
The seagulls' shout.

Carcases, final ends;
The city's edges
Where sudden dark descends;
Foundering ledges.

Overgrown sidings; choke
Of cyanide, hissing;
The huge impalpable smoke
Of the missing.

Extinctions out of sight;
On thin, grey shales
Under Antarctic white,
Bleak windrows of whales.

— *Philip Gardner*