

NEWS OF DEATH

For Tom Charlotte

Last night they came with news of death
not knowing what I would say.

I wanted to say,
“The green wind is running through the fields
making the grass lie flat.”

I wanted to say,
“The apple blossom flakes like ash
covering the orchard wall.”

I wanted to say,
“The fish floats belly up in the slow stream,
stepping stones to the dead.”

They asked if I would sleep that night,
I said I did not know.

For this loss I could not speak,
the tongue lay idle in a great darkness,
the heart was strangely open,
the moon had gone,
and it was then
when I said, “He is no longer here”,
that the night put its arm around me
and all the white stars turned bitter with grief.

- David Whyte