

Winter more than anyone knows

Downstairs in the seminar we talked
of death and writing how
the word comes into being as
the writer dies *kenosis*
someone whispered *kenosis*
repeating it so light and language hung
on the one lowered breath
and only the window held its gaze
having nothing to hide
from thin-lipped winter looking in

winter more than anyone knows

above
in the common room
a man
really was
dying
making with his palms a last impression on
the arms of a chair feeling flat wood
send its rhythm back along his veins and seeing nothing but
a rusty pigeon scrawling on a tiled roof

later on his children came
and sat with him
finding his face unlined
they tried to make it up
with memories apologies prayers one even tried a joke
filling in
time he no longer shared with them
one took his hand
as if to haul breath back

but the undertakers came
their manicured and easy hands
covered him
as neatly as school children cover books
in plastic
until he disappeared behind a stainless speech
a zip making sure its tiny teeth
were perfectly aligned

winter more than anyone knows
the long feeding words take
before they let the writer go

Noel Rowe