

Valérie Rouzeau

You dying on the phone my mum he will
not last the night see dad.

The train dark under rain not last not die my
father please oh please pass me the get there
soon.

Not deaying oh not desperish father
everlast get up run fast –

Hand watch the time we've got to Vierzon
outside it's tipping hail.

We miss each other I have no idea passing
through Vierzon that in these train arrival
times you've died.

Not die oh please but everlast until the
nurses' corridor of white.

Until your bed as fast the engine into Lyon
la Part-Dieu.

Until your forehead over now and all
together in the little room and not forget.

*

Handshakes all well and civilised and good.
No bells to ring you out, no wreath.
Me in my clumpy shoes I'm heavier on earth
than your deep heart.
The lilacs there and there the pebbles true
inside to weight the biggest vases.
Nothing alive to leave here but a lark.

Snow when your eyes are red it hurts.
In the dance of the snowflakes hand is numb
it burns a bit.
Who's going to put the boot in shoot you in the
back?
When the magpies laughed the cows would
play.
The gentleman from town has come to
sweep it all away.
Snow soon goes grey he says like a cliché.
When the cows would play.

*

When they were ten they blasted their shots
at goal right in the lush french marigolds.
The ball I find is round.
You're welcome I'm thinking three times
welcome as there's three of them.
All going birthday back.
Me if they stay together I'm their age but
really miss the ball.
Miss the french marigolds.

*

The snow has dreams it doesn't know about
with so much falling sky on us.
She's one of us you can call her Snow no
need to be polite.
This quick hello-goodbye amen of hers and
saying Flake each time!
Flake you're melting on my father's heart,
Flake you're burning on his forehead . . .
Beautiful snow white-out voice.

*

Stuck there in the ground not flinching or
thinking or anything.

And in the certain, final way of trees and
made of oak.

Like nothing nobody your life.

Snot-nosed in the goodbye hankies of my
dreams, suddenly put out.

Wind, nails.

*

The shed its iron corrugating with the wind.
Wearing boots my father's and his
fingerprints on wirecutters and swallows'
nests.

Me and dog between the murky puddles
cranes their heavy sleep – that's what they lift.

Black dress black heart black oil well out of
sight.

Oh shut up dog oh shut up dog the day is
going down.

Translated by Susan Wicks