

**Death****Dead****Mourning**

I passed the scrap  
metal yard  
by the sea

grip

heads

song

spiral

men walking

sickness

stalking

and buried

knocking

ritual

calm

spin

set

all a set piece

weight

candle

untimely

lands  
lock

clothes

wish

end

leave

Sometimes I go down to the water  
collecting cliches  
It's cloudy  
The windmills have stopped  
The leaves have dropped and the trees  
look like skeletons again.

**There are seagulls in the cemetery**

I am only here  
to walk  
to think  
about 'death in general'

but this is not my home.

and to pick  
elderberries

It is not my parish.  
The names on the stones do not  
speak to me

Practices

of cousins

twice removed if I can find any ripe.

I avoid my own  
dead

and old

tractors collecting seaweed

Practices of  
practising

Beloved  
Dearly beloved  
husband

People walk their dogs in the cemetery.  
Sometimes a dog pisses on a gravestone

father

wife

The dead are dead.

son

Beloved

There is a tree which looks like an elderberry  
but isn't. I think  
it is something else. I wonder if  
it is poisonous

The age at death is carved into each stone  
like an achievement  
everything else is forgotten

in loving memory

Often there is an empty space on the stone  
waiting for those still living

dear

There's a space for you here

brother

We'll be together again

daughter

Every empty space

Razor wire at the boundaries  
keeps the dead  
out of people's gardens

dearly loved

second son

'At rest' it says here

sergeant

departed this life  
passed away  
gone to a better place

engine driver who

youngest and beloved  
daughter  
devoted father

at peace

forever in our hearts  
in God's keeping

much respected by a  
large circle of friends

no longer with us

met his maker

a collection

kicked the bucket

of names

six feet under

Elderberries here

in the end

snuffed it

So many

made his exit

but someone sang  
a hymn

topped himself

once

slow and solemn

And out past the chapel on to Cemetery Road  
I've done my picking  
My bag is heavy with berries

dead

gone

was loved so much  
it hurts to write

cunt

**But I'd rather not go into the detail.**

I am practising  
my rituals  
my scales  
my balancing  
act  
my religious observances      regular practices

checking the tides

long flat sands  
empty  
perfect for walking

whispering

but I'd rather not go into the detail.

## Dear Lord

Yet I am trapped in a box of words

Who am I to lament?

Who am I to crumple your day

Who am I to let my voice rise with my

give voice      weave      into a      in      to      take      echo

cry

lines

Where is my script for grief?

rage sung together

Here I am standing alone

multiplying my voice

And I do not have a song to sing

Or words to say

Or black.

And he had not to

fuck off

help us feed us we are sitting on the

edge of a great chasm

darkness in the

air and emptiness

below no songs

to sing no god to sing to who offers salvation now?

respite

peace  
restinsleep

just stop

I imagine he said silently  
so many  
times  
that in the end he meticulously planned his own death.

What a  
What a  
fucking  
what a fucking  
bastard

And we still have no song to sing  
And if we did how would we know whether to mourn his life or his death?  
life of death

I remember an  
embrace from  
many years  
ago

There is fear and anger in our deepest places and still no song to sing.

I REFUSE I REFUSE I REFUSE

Are we capable of shoutingcryingscreamingwailingmoaning  
Sometimes we need silence  
But silence breaks, is broken, fractures  
and some guttural sounds  
and breathing

and when will we breathe together?

There are cemeteries everywhere on this journey.