

GRACE BUTCHER

Stroke

What killed my father
was the blood inside his head
forcing open doors where there were none,
splashing into clean rooms where
no provision had been made for such a thing,
confusing him with roaring red pictures
he didn't want to look at.

Between all the redness and the world
lay only a dim space, intermittently.
Maybe I was in there, maybe not.
Tears got in the way when I spoke
all the lost and simple words
I never bothered with before.
Maybe between the waves of the red ocean
beating at the shores of his mind
came the sounds of my words
like wind-blown cries of small birds.

I hope there was one last far island
where he could stand and listen
in some clear white ordinary silence
before that sky turned red too
and there was no difference between anything anymore
and a red wind slammed everything shut.