

Art Heifetz

The Memory of Love

As sleeping children
Place their arms
Around their pillow,
So we embrace our grief,
My fingers tracing circles
On your moist cheeks,
Your warm breath
Caressing my ear
With words like "it's all right"
When clearly it is not.

Language cannot bear
The weight of our sadness
Our grief is inarticulate,
Torn from the heart,
The barely audible cry
Of a lone whale
Seeking out his pod.

Our son has disappeared
Without a trace,
An almost man
With stubble on his chin
Who loved funny hats
And Monty Python songs,
Who played klezmer
On his clarinet
And danced to gamelan.
Who wanted clowns
To lead his funeral.

What dark vision
Propelled him
Beneath the truck's wheels,
We cannot say.
He left behind
No parting words,
Just an out-of-tune piano,
Sitting in a corner of our bedroom,
Unplayed

People greet us on the street
With homilies about "God's plan"
And "Heaven's peace."
We don't want him in a "better place."
We want him here with us.

Yet all that remains
Is the memory of love,
Tentative and fragile
Like insect wings
Preserved in amber
And the half-completed imprint of
Cretaceous leaves on shale.
Our only proof of his existence,
Our only consolation.

Art Heifetz is a retired State Farm insurance agent, returning to his first love poetry. At the urging of friends, he has begun to publish his poems, with 10 slated for publication.