

KAREN PRIDMORE

THE FINAL SALUTE

Four men lift
a scarecrow load
into the local hearse,
a black shining relic,
solid,
like the man inside once was.

An hour ago
four men
carried bundles of his clothing
to the opportunity shop,
some of them seemed almost warm
so the dealer said.

His favourite brown suit—
the one he wore at parades
is quickly cleaned
and propped up in the cluttered window
and as the hearse moves past
it raises an empty arm
in final salute.