

J.W. THOMAS

POEM FOR THE LIVING

I did not die
But people thought me dead.
 And when I came
To where they held my body
Swaying in an upturned world
I gasped and said
'You must not bury me
For can't you see
Like you I am not dead.'
 But they ignored me
And pressed on with all their silent work
Of implementing laws. Obeying rules
Without a care for reason.
 And again I cried
That they should not ignore me
Nor dismiss me with such ease.
And I stood and watched in anguish
As the hole was slowly filled
By men who later tilled the soil
Until the grass grew gently over
Leaving not the slightest trace.

And thus, in time, I saw their point of view
And smothered all my children.

ROVER

You gave him your love
And he fondly sniffed and chewed it
For a while.
Later he buried it deep
In the back-garden of his mind
And never really cared
Until you dug it up
And threw it somewhere else.
'It's mine, it's mine', he yelped,
Wagging off, head down and hurt.

THE TOMB OF THE UNKNOWN PERSON

I sometimes walk in graveyards
There's no need
 to hide the fact
Nor is there shame, presumably,
In saying I enjoy it
 in some way
Just partly understood.

There's pleasure in a celebrated grave
The nearness of greatness
 lingering
long after death
 creates a thrill
A thrill that might be killed
A moment later
 when one turns to see
A cold adjacent slab
Illegible with time and lichen
Asking some identity
For this sad, unknown person.