

## Someone From the Family

NOEL ROWE

Gary  
is our family's  
skeleton:  
out of the closet.

But it's not funny, really, I remember  
he used to play the organ for church,  
Sunday services, weddings, funerals,  
everyone said he was so good at it,  
so generous, always willing to please.  
Then he decided he was  
one of them and it all stopped.

It hit my mother worst, it broke her heart,  
my brother was her favourite, we all knew that,  
his music gave her a great deal of comfort, she'd had it hard,  
she didn't deserve this as well. The family thought it best  
not to tell him she was dead. At the time  
he was in the city, no doubt sinning, sliding  
with one of his men. He would not have come.  
And mother, at the last, didn't ask for him.

Of course, he caught the dread disease,  
and now, of course, someone from the family has got  
to do the cleaning up, the flat, the funeral arrangements,  
the will, if there is one. I don't believe it's possible still  
to save his soul. The friend this time is Thai, a pagan and useless.  
I threw his Buddha out the door and he'll be next.  
I've got a lawyer looking into it. I tell you,  
he had the cheek to call a Buddhist monk, the monk even asked  
to speak with me. 'I don't need to speak to you', I said,

'I'm a Christian'. As soon as Gary dies, I'll be on the phone to Immigration. If I have anything to do with it, he'll be lucky to even see the funeral.

I'd better get back, though there's not much point, the hospital staff are marvellous and doing all they can, but, would you believe, the silly Thai wanted to take him home to die, as if anyone could call what they had home.

Gary's in a coma now, and sometimes his hands, they're little more than bones, move across the counterpane as if to play a song. It's sad really, but I suppose someone from the family should be there when he goes to his reward.