

Anna's Faith

A foot of fresh snow arrived today,
A foot of white with no grey or yellow
In it. You would have been eighty today.
Other birthdays rejoice this morning.

Some years brought purple crocus,
Fisted hyacinths, narcissi early forming.
Today brought snow you would have murmured
At. Your home was musty, clean, smelling

Of soap chips, like you, after years of rinsing.
Catholic, bent small and propped on pillows,
A baby labouring for breath, you viewed
The park's grey lichen without a shadow

Of irony, pressing your childless palm, light
As a page, on my sleeve. One would want to pretend
For you more love than one had, to be good outside
One's self, condescension at your pliant faith

In weak tea and crochet squares muted through
Your dying to something else, perhaps,
Better: for once, late in the evening,
Kissing the papery cheek goodbye, true.

SHIRLEY GEOK-LIN LIM