

## For Sandy

Black umbrellas mushroom up above the hedge and bob along.  
Their owners, in solemn grey attire give helping hands,  
stepping with caution over ruts and puddles on the road down.  
The church is in the valley.  
We walk the verge with care avoiding snowdrops.  
Their small fragile heads bowed and white petals closed.  
After the harp, the organ, stories, songs sung and the priest had prayed,  
the great oak door was opened.  
I saw a trail of sheep along the fence line  
and beyond them a steep incline of naked trees.  
The heat we'd made inside sucked out, drawn like a last breath.  
Last words caught on air and lifted by a rush of passing birds,  
a silver turning flock escaping east.  
I hope they're taken to his last retreat those tender thoughts.  
Scooped up like smoke into dark clouds that pass.  
No more we'll see the glitter in his eyes, his cheek,  
that smile or hear his laughter, never more. It's done. He's gone.  
Our lives are lesser for his loss.  
But in the nodding snowdrops,  
in all hearts that grieve for love,  
he can live on.