

DEATH

5 October 2005

What do I know about death?
Well, I'll tell you what I know.
It happened to my Sarah,
and it happened to Emma Humphreys.
It nearly happened to me.
Pity it didn't.

Sarah, aged eighteen.
Emma, aged thirty.
And me? Fifty-six when it nearly happened to me,
in December 2004.

I'd had enough, you see, that's what happened.
So I swallowed lots of pills, all sorts,
and thought it would do the trick.

I closed my eyes,
and drifted in and out,
in and out of consciousness,
or was it sleep?
It doesn't really matter.

But it didn't do the trick,
and I woke the next morning,
surrounded by my vomit, and the memory.
The memory of all those little pills
that were supposed to take me to heaven.

I thought it would be a good idea.
Death would take me away from all the pain.
Death would take me to heaven,
to be with my Sarah, together again.

One week in hospital,
attached to the drip, then I was mended.
The liver is very poorly, they said,
but we hope this will make it better.
And it did.

My mother died when I was three.
I found out about death early, too early.
She disappeared, my mother, when I was a little girl,
too young to know where she had gone.

So, the thought of death held no fear.
I saw it as a journey, an adventure, really,
to see where it would take me.
The chance that it would take me somewhere,
anywhere, to be with Sarah,
it was a risk worth taking.
But it didn't work.
Pity.

On the occasion of receiving an e-mail, notifying me that I had been awarded the
Emma Humphreys Memorial Prize 2005, reducing me to tears of joy and sadness.

Pauline Campbell

ON THE SUBJECT OF DEATH (again)

7 October 2005

It's a bit difficult to explain
what's happening, at present
But I'm in tears, again, again, again,
and I'm tired of being in tears,
with my heart aching so hard
It feels like it's going to fall,
out of my body.

I am, I suppose, incandescent
with rage
at Sarah's death
and the way she died
and her treatment, degrading and inhumane,
at the hands of the State.

I want so very much, now, to die.
I can hardly see as I write this,
there are so many tears,
across my face.

There are no pills,
or therapy,
that can put things right.
It feels like a gaping wound
that won't close,
an injury so deep and serious
that the sutures don't work.

It will, sooner or later,
in one way or another, kill me.
Yes, that's what I said, kill me.
It will kill me.
Believe me, it will.

Pauline Campbell

Pauline Campbell .
