

## No Ascension

You are in hospital, so we buy plane tickets.  
You are dying when we reach your bedside. You  
are dead, so we wear black for forty days. Forty  
days are over but I'm still wearing black.

In London no one knows why.  
In Cyprus, we moved as one  
black cloud of grief, the whole family  
dressed in the same colour

and for once I fitted in with them.  
We were all black for forty days.  
On the forty-first day my mother says,  
*We don't have to wear black anymore.*

She wears blue jeans and a white top.  
I put away my white and all my blues too. There  
is only black on my clothes rail.  
Casual black, smart black, trendy

East London black, punk black,  
sporty black – black is the only colour  
I can be, my mother cannot be black with me  
and no one else can be black for me.

Either side of your grave I was black.  
And this poem is about me, not you.  
How I haven't cleaned the mud from your grave  
off the shoes I bought for your funeral.

How often I look at the photos I took of you  
smiling, dying, dead, and being buried.  
How your watch and rosary beads are in the  
draw of this desk I am writing this poem on.

How grief makes much more sense to me  
than feeling depressed when times are good.  
How a grandfather is meant to die old  
and surrounded by his family, just as you did.

How my notebook is a grave and my laptop  
is a grave, how my phone is a grave and my bed  
is a grave, and there was no ascension after forty  
days. And I have stayed buried, with you.