

POETRY

They Cannot Come Back

By **Julian Nangle**

Still she persists in death and does not return,
even now on my death bed with starched white pillows
my hands held close by those who love me –
still no word, no breath, no sense of her coming
for a final farewell, or a whispered goodbye.

But of course it is so, as so forcefully I learn
those who've gone before must wait for us to follow,
reaching down from the stars far, far above me.

They cannot come back, physically transforming,
but only through spirit, in a light too shy
to brazenly counter in stark relief
all that holds us safe in our cradle of belief.