

POETRY/FICTION

Poem

HOW CAN YOU BEAR TO WATCH SOMEONE DIE?

How can you bear to watch someone die?
How can you bear to watch someone die?
How can you just say “good-bye?”
Often I ask myself this question
As it drives me into a deeper reflection

I recall my days as a nursing student
When I was expected to be strong and prudent
It was not very long ago,
When theory was all I had to know

I recall my first dying patient-suffering in pain
Hear him, help him- I said over and over again
We did everything we could-she said
Please do something I pled
I couldn't watch him die-so I cried
You can't do that-she said; and I complied

How can I bear to watch someone die?
How can I just say “good-bye?”
I asked myself this question
As it drove me into a deeper reflection

The day when my gramps died
All I did was sat and cried
You are a Nurse-You can't cry- she said
I am human- I can cry, I pled

How can I bear to watch someone die?
How can I just say “good-bye?”
I re-asked myself this question
And it drove me into a deeper reflection

Today, I care for dying patients
I witness their precious last moments
I sit with them. I feel their pain
Crying with them is certainly humane

It is still hard to watch someone die!
It is hard to say, “Good-Bye”!
But to care for them is all I know
I wish I knew that long ago!

—Karimah Alidina