

pdm

he was my father and i watched him die
i longed to hold him but i didn't dare try
i wanted to talk to him but i didn't know what to say
so i said i'd stay a while, then be on my way

they came for him on a monday night
but he was waiting for a pan am flight
bringing my sister all the way from new york
he'd missed her childhood from about the time she could talk

and so they talked about the missing years
he was at peace now that she was near
it was good and brave what she did that day
she freed his soul from the final fairway

later that night he called for his maid
to thank her for the home that she'd made
for the thirty years since she was sixteen
he said "i'm going to slip away now" with sister morphine

we said goodnight but we didn't know
that it was goodbye within an hour or so
of leaving him to wine and dine next door
he was breathing in the morning but he'd left long before

we stood in reverence around his bed
that awful breathing, full of dread
tore at the silence of this terrible death
until at four o'clock my father held his breath

the love of his servants was absolute
they dressed him in his finest suit
his african children unwilling to comprehend
their eyes out of focus unable to accept the end

i think of him almost every day
i wish to god i'd had the courage to say
how much i loved him and to wish him goodbye
he was my father and i watched him die

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