

Perhaps then

Before I can know,
I need to smell bread baking
but not have bread to eat.

I need to be ill
with Lou Gehrig's disease, something
that can be treated but not cured.

I need to fall and feel pain,
taste betrayal by a friend
and the coming and going of hate.

I need to feel my lover's touch,
hug my granddaughter
and know my unconditional dog.

I need to be swallowed by death--
pet, friend, parent, child and spouse
and smell the fresh dirt of my grave.

by Arlin Buyert