

On Being

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

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

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

I need to feel the touch of my lover,
know the hug of a grandchild
and see the wagging tail of my dog.

I need to know the death
of a pet, friend, parent, child or spouse-
and smell the fresh dirt of my grave.

Perhaps then.

By Arlin Buyert