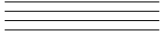


P O E M   A T   T H E   D E A T H   B E D  
O F   A N   A T H E I S T



F R A N N I E   L I N D S A Y

He can still make out basic shapes:  
his son's hand laid on his, his tray  
brought close, a spoon of pudding  
lifted to his mouth, although  
he pushes it away –  
his appetite now shutting down;  
he can still hear you  
if you shout, the way his parents  
used to scold  
their dog; the shouting  
comforts him – a music station  
left on low to help him sleep;  
and he hates prayer  
but lets a little bit get said,  
as long as those who say it  
say it without telling him, and call it  
something else; and keep  
a proper distance,  
like the thin, aloof house cat  
he's fed for eighteen years  
who curls at his feet from time  
to time, then for its private reasons  
slinks away.