**1.**

She’s where the grass is greener,

She’s on the bright side of the fence.

She’s sleeping with the stars,

That’s all anyone can say.

There is so much more that I could have said,

I should have listened to all the warning signs.

They say she’s happy now, what went wrong before?

Why didn’t you tell me that you didn’t love you anymore?

Did I say something that made you close a door?

There’s more to say that we can’t say anymore.

You’re in a better place,

You’re in another realm.

I know the facts,

But maybe the rest of the world can’t face them yet.

In a few years they won’t know that you existed at all,

I know you are loved now more than I ever loved you.

They say she’s happy now, what went wrong before?

Why didn’t you tell me that you didn’t love you anymore?

Did I say something that made you close a door?

There’s more to say that we can’t say anymore.

They say she had so much more to give

In sympathetic tones.

While I sit here thinking

you planned it all this way.

They say all the glorious things she did in her short life,

I think of all the small things you did that have cost me a lifetime.

I watched you drift away,

I watched you stare into space.

I’ll join you in that place,

Oh, I can’t wait to see your face.

They say she’s happy now; I know what went wrong before.

You didn’t tell me that you didn’t love you anymore.

I said nothing and I made you close a door.

There’s more to say that I’ll say when I come to call.

**2.**

His favourite music filled the room with its booming sound pounding like a heartbeat, blocking out thoughts or feelings that could possibly enter my mind, while I packed up vinyl records and various other belongings. No matter how mind-numbing Guns N’ Roses can be, one thought was ever present in my mind:

*This shouldn’t have happened.*

I flicked through the box to find the matching sleeves for the records hung on the wall and attempted to ignore the tight feeling in my chest. The tightness always comes back when I think about him and this time did not disappoint. The room felt almost alien without his beloved records, and I hated the fact that I had to take them down, but I chose to do this myself as I’m the only one he trusted with his collection. This is how he would have wanted it, if he’d even thought about any of this at his age.

*This shouldn’t have happened.*

I shuffled through the maze of carboard boxes towards the window where a small collection of picture frames and other things littered the windowsill. A small smile crept onto my face as I picked up each frame, one by one, reliving the memories. The pictures were of us from years ago: us sitting on a swing set with ice creams, me smiling wildly at the camera and him staring into the sky; us at the beach with our heads sticking out from the sand, Dad had buried us and threatened to leave us there if we tried to get out;  the last was of us on holiday in Cornwall with our backs to the camera, paddling in the sea. I used to love it there. We’d stay in the same cottage every summer and go on blustery clifftop walks in the early hours of the morning as the sun rose slowly in the sky bathing us in warmth. As I grew older though, I seemed to like the place less and less. My friends would go to warmer destinations abroad like Marbella or Lanzarote and I would rather be there than Cornwall. He always called it paradise though; it was his ‘favourite place on earth’, and I never understood that. I never appreciated our holidays like he did, how could it be paradise when it’s not even next to the Mediterranean Sea?

*This shouldn’t have happened.*

It felt to me as if the records were now his voice, calling me, comforting me and with a sudden urgency that I hadn’t experienced since he died I pulled towards me those I’d carelessly scattered on the floor like confetti at a wedding and began to slowly look through, one by precious one. He loved those records; he’d loved the music those black discs brought to us and they now became my focus. Each one had a story, a memory, the lyrics became his voice - these would be my crutch. My heart lurched as his face filled my thoughts and his voice sang out strong and loud. He was here with me, like he always promised, holding my hand and listening alongside, his music a comforting, protective arm around my shoulder. Without warning, I felt like we were both at peace.

**3.**

The chair groaned wearily as she collapsed into it. She gazed at her children and her grandchildren who sat opposite her; they had been staring absent-mindedly at the floor even whilst she came in. They had met her gaze only for an instant before resuming their contemplation of the floorboards. She gave a small sigh and tilted her head up at the ceiling, her thoughts never straying from that dreaded monosyllable: death.

Would it be painful? She shivered before feeling a searing pain career through her body. The moment could not be prepared for. That was the worst part. After a slight grimace had passed across her face, she gazed through the window. The sky was blue; a cherry blossom swayed in the breeze. Its branches danced delightfully, shedding pink petals as they did so. She wore a smile; it soon faded. She knew her position. It had not changed. It would never change. Although the sky and the cherry blossom seemed to be telling her to be happy and she felt that she was supposed to be happy, she didn’t have something which she needed: time.

The time she had left was dwindling rapidly and this fact dominated the thoughts which were rushing through her mind. Resting her head on her hand, she focused on her concerns more carefully. After lifting her head up, her face looked as if she had a particularly unpleasant stomach ache. She couldn’t keep thinking like this to herself. She understood now: she needed to talk to someone. She glanced at her children and grandchildren and realised what she had never come to terms with for months. What she needed was people.

The people were already there sitting opposite her; it was just that their mouths were sealed shut. They did not want to talk about it; she needed to. She felt a twinge of responsibility and guilt for causing the children to have to consider it. She knew, however, that they were thinking about it too and it would be better for all of them if they discussed it. The image of a calm family discussion floated into her mind and she relaxed comfortably in her chair, with a sigh that was not due to exhaustion. She was ready to face death.

The chair gave a final groan before it gave up and onto the cold, hard floor she fell.