

When Death Comes

CAROL TYX

after Mary Oliver

When death comes
like the dentist,
sticking her hand
into your mouth, wielding
sharp instruments
as she searches out
all the dark places,
the shadows of decay,
the weak spots
in the worn enamel,
I hope she will be like
my dentist, making sure
I'm sufficiently numb
before drilling in
so it's pressure I feel,
not pain, her skilled hands
steady and swift
as she replaces
my old filling,
trying her best
to make it smooth
as she hums in my ear.