

**for Sam**

**i. exposition**

was thinking of you the other day  
when you were  
blissfully not answering emails  
remembered aloud to Mine

who was your student, too  
and wrote music by you  
that summer of love

was writing a poem about death that day  
while you were riding  
and dying  
how I'd direct mine:

*the moment I die will be  
downstage  
center  
lips  
parted  
swallow as  
lights  
steal  
actor from audience*

*of course, there's risk in a wish*

*of  
so much choreography*

*so*

*forget costumes and drapery  
tinny bulbs won't be necessary  
people in the seats be  
those I carry within  
my heart, dying –  
that's art*

but your dying –  
robbery

**ii. development**

was using a public toilet that night  
when you were already  
making music from space  
got the email: sad news from the hill

struck  
by a Sonata  
shock steals my memory of form  
find something to say – how?  
poetic injustice  
struck by a sonata  
says it all

dropped  
that class with you  
ran from composition while

*not enough women composing*  
you cried, cheerfully

was sitting next to you last reunion  
while you were imbibing  
and smiling  
asked me: *would the orchard return?*

*we need a woman to lead*  
you cried, steadily

blinded  
Mine and I  
went for late-night Thai  
not promised another day we  
couldn't eat leftover salad in  
your honor we counted the beats  
three against four against three  
the angel chimes soared  
played the fire escape

### iii. recapitulation

was thinking of you today  
while you were  
knowing Time  
whispered aloud to Mine

### iv. coda

may you wheel your way in  
hills of ice cream greet you and  
your sweet dog dancing

may your view be out curved glass  
to a steeple crowned in quill  
home on that range

the orchard grows again  
in every funky key  
by your hardhat, electroacoustic hand

theory hosts among the trees  
musical machines tinker  
organ tunes turned subtle jokes

for those who know how to listen

oh, the wise way you were  
the comic glue

all the titles they claim  
for you are true

but mostly you're the man  
this world needs to be

oh, unimaginable tragedy  
gentle man taken brutally

for goodness' sake  
we'll ring the bell

do tell of what it sounds like  
from where you are

creator coming round  
to what you knew

I'm typing  
less emails and  
answering in due time

taking space to ripen  
a sonata inspired by you  
this cider season

and for as long as I've got

thank you

**from Alison**

by Alison McLaughlin '11

*Italics in Section i are for Alison's quotation of a poem she was writing on November 9, 2017.  
Italics in Section ii are as close as she can remember of Sam's remarks to her.*