

Becoming Something Other

I gotta call - I got a phone call from my mother
Your dad is changing - he is becoming something other
& you may not recognise him when you come
& he may not realise it's you
There's part of him that is completely numb

He'd not been well - his eyes & legs were almost useless
He'd been depressive - he hated looking so damn foolish
& the cat-scan showed his brain was losing mass
& he didn't know each morning
Where he was or how he'd come to this impasse

He took the phone - his voice was querulous & distant
I heard an old man - & I knew it in an instant
& he told me how it was to be so blind
& he told me how it was to know
Precisely how it felt to lose his mind

I asked my dad - how much his vision was impaired
He said he sees things - but that the things he sees
are things that are not there
Then he paused & quietly spoke these words that chilled...
He said 'I have my own small thoughts about that'
& I felt the air around me grow quite still

For my dad was telling me that he was dying
He was telling me in such a gentle way
& I couldn't stop myself from softly crying
As he formed the mindless words that had their say



Chris Knox is a New Zealand musician, songwriter, cartoonist & critic. Chris is a pivotal figure of the Flying Nun record label. He gained prominence with The Enemy then Toy Love and later formed the Tall Dwarfs with guitarist Alec Bathgate, as well as releasing several solo albums. His current band is The Nothing. Chris had a life-altering stroke in June 2009 & a fund-raising album was released of musicians from around the world performing his songs called '*Stroke - Songs For Chris Knox*'. There is a website/blog to support Chris' recovery - www.chrisknox.co.nz



Prose and Poetry

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