

## THE FRONT ROW

I remember clearly  
Being in the sixth row.  
Paying little, if any attention,  
Box in the middle.  
Ignoring the words spoken from the lectern.  
Knowing there was sadness in the five rows ahead.  
Unconcerned.  
Death was so far away.  
When in the fifth row,  
Able to see the lectern a bit better  
But still, not paying much attention  
Seeing the shaking of the gray hair in the first row,  
So far away, only glancing the closed rectangle.  
Forgetting now, how I thought about being in the  
Fourth and third rows.  
Dammit, I was much too busy to think about the box.  
Let's just get this thing done and continue.  
In the second row, not long ago,  
Looking at the slower moving ones in the first row.  
Sitting alongside the box now, feeling it a bit closer,  
Still unconcerned, listening to a few choice words  
From the lectern.  
Seeing how those in the first row  
Were reacting in somber words, in controlled silence.  
In the first row now.  
I look back beyond two, three, and four.  
Paying attention only to the sixth row.  
I smile at their lack of fear, poking away at one another.

Almost laughing, both them and me... and reprimanding eyes.

From the third and fourth row.

My attention turns to the box.

I remember who lies inside, fondly sometimes.

Other times, sadly, and others, with nothing on my mind.

Still without fear, without worry, for when I

Am in the middle.

Again...not paying much attention to the lectern.

They are only words still.