

Next Door to Death

Surprising that your dust does not quite fill
the small hole in your lawn. The family

tread turf: widow, children, their kids . . . “Smile please”!
You enjoyed black jokes, your head adjusted

by carcinogenic drugs . . . Your mother
erected your cross, you said: old Adam

survived, became a Quaker war hero.
Your brother used his head, Oxford don, left

you the tin tedium of a Kiwi town
and domestic disciplines: a good wife,

God. Failed writer proof-reading classifieds
year on mortgaged year, you mowed down summers

bawling hymns, white browed, mad-eyed, one hot night
dying, crying your ‘Redeemer Liveth.’

SELWYN PRITCHARD