



## harvest

Another sleepless night of quiet flight in some small plane to some small town,  
each one unique and everyone the same with their own short tale of unthought tragedy and I—the arbiter of this exchange of organs from dead to dying quietly wait. Bitter and unhappy to be awake when the world lies sleeping guilt makes me think who else lies sleepless tonight, regretting some then unknown last word or promise unfulfilled.

This process of saying dying is now death but not yet dead disturbs the certainty of pulseless forms so much easier to declare, to walk away from convinced that nothing else remains.

But here, here is something more—brain dead we say, no person here—just blood  
and bone and organ waiting now as some full ship for Ahab's beckon call.

And the child—alone with bandaged head and swollen face lies broken and unrecognized.

She bears the silent cut to find a quiet heart. Betrayed by death and unaware the child is gone,  
the heart persists. But not for long—a simple clamp, a cut—the heart bleeds out and comes to rest. Like some new age resurrectionist or sanctioned Burke and Hare my harvest is complete and I come home.

*Charles Hoopes, MD*

Dr. Hoopes (AΩA, Duke University, 1991) is assistant professor of Surgery at the University of California, San Francisco. His address is: University of California, San Francisco, Cardiothoracic Surgery, 350 Parnassus Avenue, Suite 150, San Francisco, California 94143. E-mail: [hoopesc@surgery.ucsf.edu](mailto:hoopesc@surgery.ucsf.edu).