

## A POEM BY SIMON

"In Memoriam",  
The heading states.  
'20 words free'.

Well, your name takes 2  
(or 3).  
Died.  
That's another.  
But why bother?  
You wouldn't be if you hadn't.  
And say I do  
say 'died'.  
Should I say 'of',  
and when?  
Or why?  
And is the date one word or two?

So instead I'll say who you were  
to me.  
In twenty words.  
(Less 2 or 3)  
(And another for 'me')

Shall I put 'lover'  
or 'teacher'  
or 'friend'?  
Or all three?  
If I do, there's one more:  
'my'.  
That makes four.  
Plus the two that make 'you'  
(or the 3)  
Plus 'me'.  
Which makes seven or so.  
Only thirteen to go  
to describe who you were  
to me.

'Who you were....'  
Well, let's see.  
You were  
'beautiful'  
lying there  
Peaceful at last.  
And the still of you  
finally  
set free our past in our mind  
which till now I'd been blocking  
because of my fear  
that I wouldn't be able to hold back  
the tears  
when I visited you.

I thought I was being strong.

I was wrong.

I wish I'd had the strength to cry  
with you,  
for you,  
for me,  
before you died.

I know you understood.

You were  
'strong'.  
Through your pain  
you saw mine.  
you always could.  
And for that I love you.

You were 'unconditional in  
your love of life',  
even when you knew  
you were dying.  
"Why mourn,"  
you asked,  
smiling,  
"something not yet passed?  
I want to celebrate."

And at last  
I understand.

And this,  
this sum of twenty words free,  
of you plus four  
plus eight plus me  
is my celebration  
of all that you were.  
So the five words unwritten  
should be about all that you are:

You were my lover, teacher, friend  
Beautiful, strong, unconditional  
in your love of life.  
You are much missed by me.'