

## Naming the Rose

Peter Hammill

He had worked on this for years  
Since they know they'd be childless:  
To hybridise a thornless  
And deep-scented damask rose.  
She was always by his side  
In the lengthening shadows...  
This case is closed.

Ena Harkness, Constance Spry,  
Emily Grey, Margaret Merrill,  
Zepherine Drouhin, Aimee Vibert and Blanche Moreau -  
All these spirits still survive in the act of the grower  
(in peace and compassion he's...)  
Naming the rose,  
Naming the rose in the memory of sweetness.

Dedication to the call  
And he offers up the hope  
That love conquers all.

It's not easy to explain  
How he felt at her passing  
The very day on which  
The most perfect bloom was full-blown;  
Tender cruelty that she'd  
Never share in this moment,  
Naming the rose.

He takes her ashes to the seed-bed  
And works them in gently  
So that her soul will rise like sap  
In the plants as they grow  
And then whispering her name  
Writes it out on the label,  
Naming the rose,  
Naming the rose  
For the sake of her sweetness.

Naming the rose  
In the memory of sweetness.