For Absent Friends

Steve Hackett

Sunday at six when they close both the gates
a widowed pair,
still sitting there,
Wonder if they're late for church
and it's cold, so they fasten their coats
and cross the grass, they're always last.

Passing by the padlocked swings,
the roundabout still turning,
ahead they see a small girl
on her way home with a pram.

Inside the archway,
the priest greets them with a courteous nod.
He's close to God.
Looking back at days of four instead of two.
Years seem so few (four instead of two).
Heads bent in prayer
for friends not there.

Leaving twopence on the plate,
they hurry down the path and through the gate
and wait to board the bus
that ambles down the street.

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