For Absent Friends

Gilgamesh

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 Heads bent in prayer for friends not there Leaving two pence 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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