

No ordinary day

It was the saddest day
we had ever known.
No pushing or shoving,
everyone unusually
well-behaved.

Assembly, no teachers,
just us listening, the Head
holding back tears, trying
to tell us how she felt about
the accident.

Playtime, but nobody
played. We whispered,
watching the empty road,
where no-one walked this
summer morning.

The village held its breath.
We stood by the gate, cooks,
cleaners, caretaker, teachers,
children. We waited together
in silence.

Then, 'He's coming! Adrian's
coming!' one of the little ones
called. Glittering like glass,
a long black car inched
round the corner.

In the back, a small coffin,
buried under a mound of
flowers. Then came the cars
full of familiar people in
unfamiliar black.

They slid past the school.
'A five-minute run-around,
then inside!' the duty teacher
said. Released, we tumbled on
to the grass.

The day struggled back to
nearly-normal. At home-time,

parents grabbed our hands
and the ice-cream van had
few customers.

Moira Andrew