

## Bad News on a Scrap of Newspaper

*by Roque Dalton*

Nowadays when my friends die  
only their names die.

How can I hope, down in this rotten hole,  
to take in more than the newsprint,  
the sheen of delicate black letters,  
arrows deep into personal memories?

Only those who live outside the prisons  
can honor the corpses, wash off  
the grief for their dead ones with embraces,  
scratch up the grave with fingernail and tears.

Not those of us in jail: we just whistle  
to let the sound play down the news.