

Alternative Medicine

(for Brian, 1943-)

She missed my call.

The April weather so fine she was *painting,*
potting-up plants, working on driftwood:
anything really to keep me outside.
No-one could get my father into the house before sundown -
it must be in the genes.

His too – my Irish brother-in-law
pottering daily on peaty land,
struggling to stem the growth,
transistor music playing.

Means to give the house
one final lick of paint –
Imperial Chemicals' special brand.

His kind of therapy
(just like the radio).

Dead to the world –
like a poet perched on the leads
or a fiddler on the roof, denying
the dusk, steeped in the beauty:
perfect oblivion.

Won't come in till the sun goes down. **Carolyn King**