



Names

She was Eliza for a few weeks
When she was a baby –
Eliza Lily. Soon it changed to Lil.

Later she was Miss Steward in the baker's shop
And then “my Love,” “my darling,” Mother.

Widowed at thirty, she went back to work
As Mrs Hand. Her daughter grew up,
Married and gave birth.

Now she was Nanna. “Everybody
Calls me Nanna,” she would say to visitors.
And so they did – friends, the tradesmen, the doctor.

In the geriatric ward
They used the patients' Christian names.
“Lil,” we said, “or Nanna.”
But it wasn't in her file
And for those last bewildered weeks
She was Eliza once again.

Wendy Cope

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