
Yizkor

Ray Shankman

I hear you calling
this time from the grave
you are still giving me advice:
don't lie to your wife
don't neglect your children
don't spend every penny you have
your love was silent your affection muted
by your sulky secrecy

but I'm not angry with you
I can only feel your absence
(so unlike your business trips)
definite and final

would prayer bring you closer to me?
if you should appear what would I say?
would I want to talk to you at all?
No, I would only want to caress
the soft veined onion skinned crinkles
of your hands

Ray Shankman's latest book of poems is For Love of the Wind (1991). He teaches poetry and Bible at Vanier College in Montreal.