

## Flying Souls

Corpse: dead, cold to the touch  
What does it mean to die?  
Sadness? Regret?  
At the end, the human body is just flesh  
At the end, we are all the same  
In Tibet, the preferred funeral practice is a sky burial  
Fear.  
Eyes bulging, mouth hanging open  
The *thomden* cuts into the body like it is nothing  
Like that person never moved or talked before

Suddenly, there is commotion above my head  
Vultures  
Big, beautiful creatures  
There are many of them  
Feathers and wings  
Flying gracefully through the blue sky  
Eyes fixed on the corpse  
I watch as they crowd around the body  
Communicating with a language of their own

Sooner or later, there is nothing left  
No remains of the previous human that was in front of my eyes  
Slightly untrue  
The dead human's spirit speaks to me  
"It is okay. Move on. I am safe now"  
Hope. Reassurance.  
The vultures are departing now  
Flying souls

-Tenzin Sonam