

## **A Funny Kind of Grief**

I dreamed an old dog slipped off his leash  
to romp with the geese down by the pond,  
but in some trick of grief's desire, the scene  
shifted and my mentor, real as skin and bone,  
tilled his garden for the next season.

He was the kind of man who would save  
hatchlings from the tines of the tiller,  
nudge his fledglings into flight. My daughter  
had sent me his obituary the day before.

It read like a staccato riff: born, lived, died; dear wife  
relegated to one paltry last line. Am I selfish  
to want a line of my own? What I was to him  
would fit between commas, white font in white space;  
and he to me, a past that's always present.

It is late afternoon in late October. A dog  
gives up his spot in the sun to walk with me.

He is a funny thing, chasing shadows  
in the slanting light.

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