

## BURIALS

Pulling through Montana in the snow  
we cling to the tail lights of the last car  
blurring back into the darkness.

"Like the inside of a coffin," my father says,  
as if knowing the exact shade the dead see,  
lying stiff, frozen eyes peering up through closed lids—

he shifts in his seat, watches the road disappear,  
thinks again of dying and the burials we've seen,  
his father's simple reduction to ashes.

How small the urn, how light, for a man  
that stood 6'3", carried a boy on his shoulders,  
lived on trains as a youth, picked apples as a man.

This past summer, watching him thin  
to disappearing, blurring out lines between lives,  
my father trying to return pieces, fragments, time,

the body burning, the dark smells of crematoriums,  
funeral homes, and pale faced lawyers.  
Something merges, ends, and begins.

My father placing the ashes back into the air,  
offerings to the skies, to the seas,  
unaware how Buddhist he is at this moment,

how the faint sound of bagpipes echoes,  
how the ashes fall catching light,  
reflecting something back into the silence,

the dark birth of the sun coming into view.