

The grave digger knows
of slag and worms,
ditches dug under the green,
rot beneath red roses,
tiled granite and marble.
He lowers himself daily
to excavate beside the old beds
of corpses; hair, nails,
gray bones in dresses
or suits, calcified in coffins.
At noon he takes lunch,
reads the paper and naps
by the newest trench,
wakes on a sun-warm stone
to watch the unearthly clouds.
He obscures the clay hill
by the empty hole with sod, pick
flowers, pack up, head home,
knowing the truth lies
six feet deep without a dream.

FAREWELL STREET

Father, I am at the table
knife & fork for one,
your spirit in the kitchen
cries & breaks my bread.
Father, I am eating rice
not wanting to be home;
my bowl is cracked & yellow,
your spoon cuts my tongue.
Father, I am frying a fish
needing to eat its dream,
mine got drown in the river
when autumn turned me gray.
Father, I am laying out plates
dull from dried-up tears;
grief seasons the meat
I swallow at every meal.

SPIRITUAL WEIGHT

I wanted to read to my dying father,
cart his recumbent body and mind
to my room stacked with books;
cluttered chamber where I was confused
by men far greater than he.
I wanted to confess the cot
where I'd been ravished
by Ginsberg, Miller, and Williams,
plot to concoct his existential death,
jacket the corpse with pages of Sartre,
officialiate by reading Trutrock's Song.
But Lewis was dead, determined
to die ignorant, unread.
Defeated, rejected,
I retreated behind locked doors
to hide my bookish heart
in a heap of brilliant leaves.

BURIED IN BOOKS

When father failed and was gone,
the relatives sat in our living room
dredging skillful lies to comfort
his widow, daughters,
and their boyfriends,
now free to ascend the steps
without his after-whisky
hot harangue. The November sky,
steely beyond slate windows,
vanished when the fog from talk
coated panes and diminished twilight.
Mother, in a frilly apron, arranged
cold cuts, salads, and breads
while I listened to the same-
old dramas, replayed every holiday,
wondering if a life could change
on account of a death.

TEDIUM OF MOURNING

Itty Bitty Book
of

Pocket Poems

**SALTED
WOUNDS**



by

Pat Hegnauer

FIRST JOURNEY

To wander is best,
midnight to morning,
follow the fading footsteps left
in paths; more narrow as years
obscure the distance
in the dimming wood. I began
the trek, alone, at first,
walking by musty smells
and feathered calls
that teased me on to find the falls,
the well, the highest tree
in clouds, burrow a bed
hid in the dusty bracken
where the noiseless air
pillows a childish mind
tangled fast
in a father's grappling pain.

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Origami Poetry Projects

SALTED WOUNDS

by Pat Hegnauer

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