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# Aunt Laura Moves toward the Open Grave of Her Father

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AUNT LAURA MOVES TOWARD THE OPEN GRAVE  
OF HER FATHER

You are coming toward us  
As if you have done this  
Every day of your life.

You are stumbling. You are my  
Aunt, our ignorant, old fool  
And you are completely in

Black. We are, to put it plain,  
Putting grandfather into  
A hole in the ground. We are

Dry eyed as dry ice is cold.  
We have made it clear to you  
How much you did wrong, how much

Better we could have done al-  
Most anything. Except this.  
This perfection. This grief.

You are in black. You are moving  
Toward us. You are wisdom,  
The dark that stabs me at midnight

On any street because I  
Am who I am and we are violent  
At the horrible, hard gates of

Paradise. You are an army  
Of crepe, onyx. Like the wind  
You move curtains of sorrow,

Simplicity, toward us.  
And I love you while Grandpa  
Slips now from our fingers for

Ever and I take your hand  
And we hold on together.

*Joseph de Roche*

### GO BACK UP

The people sitting at the table with a child  
are parents, because of money everyone turns  
the fork over and the child yawns, dessert  
comes and the father takes a long swallow, but  
for the most part he keeps to himself, letters  
on the sideboard contain an occasional reference  
to the mother's illness, she asks the child  
to bathe and change for bed, gives the door  
one more look. The father shifts his legs,  
irritation changes to thoughtful dismay, my  
own son says when I tell him the story as long  
as he can see some branches through the window  
he knows the trees must be on the other side  
of the wall, there is grace in his voice now,  
we spend most of the night upstairs refilling  
the humidifier, sometimes we give up and rush  
him out to the damp air, there is juice for  
really bad coughing, rain is falling now thank  
the Lord, it's between fifty and sixty degrees,  
the parents turn toward their son, chat with  
their hands, there are puppets on them from Hungary.