

THE BEST THING MY FATHER DID WAS LIE

People, all the pretty people lie so well and tell
truth like amateurs in little threadbare theaters—
It all comes out damp and gray, slurred and slurried,
going away and coming back.

Where do you dig for truth? Out on the parallax,
deep in the center or in the middle? There's a difference—
One is this fence I'm on; the pickets
are cut and dried, alternating black and white, scratching
fact sore, but not much truth.
People climb here out of context
to reach boughs of that ancient tree.
But wormy to the core, the whole crop, and my father said
conqueror worms were final ONLY truth.

He polished his lies like jewels, wore one
in each eye and a ruby in his tongue. His skull rattled
with those in storage for special events and Sunday.
He mined the world for his rough stock
mine polished was dull beside.

We inlaid his coffin with favorites, the rest
he willed to me, never to go with fence-climbing,
fruit-picking clothes. I keep them here, see?
Worms have started on the box but the gems are still
beautiful and whole. I planned to sit here

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until all were devoured, but it won't happen.
Worms tried to bite the big ruby,
sprung their jaws and died. Only harder stones
can make dust of these. Or some marvelous ray.

Until unequivocal then, the beasts will eat,
the jewels will glitter, each its own irrelevance,
and I am tired of watching.

All the truth ore is down there in either sludge.
This quasi-I must jump off one of these sides
and grope
for nothing absolute.

If only some almost holy wind would push.