

There is a twinge in the quiet air,
and a yearning within me like a free-fall —
I almost feel ready to be blown away
with the dry, sunburnt leaves.

I'm standing Grandma's grave,
and Grandpa's is just a few feet to the left.
The ground is not hard yet from frost,
and it's clear that the grass is done growing until spring.

The last time I was here, we were burying Grandpa's
remains.
I remember my feet shyly packing snow behind my
cousins
as we stepped up to bless the casket with holy water
from the priest;
he had to wait a long time before one of us was brave
enough to come forward.

Now I wish to be here again, and at my father's side,
to learn the truths of the tales I've heard
since we stopped visiting.

I wish to hear unknown stories,
told in their bare nakedness,
without gloss or restraint.

I wish to revisit the places Dad shared with me when I
was small,
and ask him the questions I know now
that I didn't know before.

Everything he gave me is real,
but there is more I haven't seen.

I've started to wonder what he was like
when he was my age, before he met Mom.
I know only the basic details of those years,
the kind a grade-school biography report would tell.

I wonder about my lack of a brother or sister,
given that I am surrounded by so many cousins, uncles, and
aunts.

I wonder why my dada and his siblings
all moved away from their hometown,
and why they didn't marry any of their childhood friends.

I have been told they left to explore colleges and careers in
other states,
and I know they picked from these far-off lands
the best wives, husbands, and jobs the foreign soil could
produce.

I know they still come back together in their childhood
town,
but only for moments —
they are gathered like flashing but fading leaves in small
cyclones
by weddings, funerals, class reunions;
things they enjoy or are still bigger than themselves.

I know there is much I do not see,
for as the years have passed since childhood,
it feels as if I've been walking deeper into a foggy and
continually darkening night;
it's like all the streetlamps are being gradually extinguished
while the road signs are being taken away.

What I have and I know are my questions,
my gaps, and my desires,
and my fear that all will keep growing
and never be filled.