And My Way Also  
Written by Thomas Quinn

My grandfather, that solid oak of denim. I remember hearing his voice before dinner, praying for my trials and grandmother’s cancer.

He held his voice strong and upright, lifted his words above our heads as a pure fog rises over the murkiness of a pond.

I sat in silence, hoped that my voice may reverberate like his—praying mountains out of the creases of his lips.

My Father looked at him like God, watched him lumber through the house—a silent reverence.

Father use to tell me, pride dripping in the curves of the syllables: 
I hope I’ll end up like your papaw.

But when Orriel, my grandmother, died, that great oak of denim was stripped of his bark, his protection from the cold wind of a world for one.

Without that protection Charles began to dry out, wither, lose his leaves in the nursing home bathroom.

His words grew murky and melted back into the pond, blending with algae and waiting for the rain. The mountain he prayed crumbled into airy grey sand.

At night he would cry for his Orriel—eyes like giant mirrors wet with confusion.

Moaning Where is my Orriel? over and over until the words lost their touch and syllables swam around the room. 
And my Father, oh god, my Father—nested beside Charles while he died, praying for Heaven like a bird crying against the cat.

After my grandfather died Father told me, formal and raw: I’ll never end up like my father.