

Commended

- P208

One Broken Knife

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There's a rightness
in using one knife for everything
from cutting up a chop
to dividing the bulbs of daffodils.

And when the point is broken
and it attains that animalistic
pig-angry bearing
it becomes your weapon

not seriously
but it becomes your totem knife.
Nobody picks the broken one, right?

It is the twin of a knife
found in the grave
of someone you used to be
in the fourth century.

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Radio feels mysterious.
You walk about
listening with your eyes
looking at your hands
going about their thing
straightening books.

Your hands
do not hear
and go on working.
Your hands are farmers.

But your ears are little children
who ask about God
just as they fall asleep.

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Dad used his broken knife
to eat apple.
Sitting at the kitchen table
slicing off shapes
feeding them into his mouth
with the same knife-hand.

The blade missed his eye
by a distance
so small
it was religious.

He'd sharpen his knife
and the greasy drag
would ring through the house
black
like a local abduction.

Once he used the knife
to open a bag of cement
and out of the rip
a grey dust rose
like the spirit.

℘

When I broke
the tip off my knife
I saw
it could leave the kitchen.

The hands that don't listen
cut
from a root-bound aloe
a clutch
of sappy broken knives
and hurled them into a vacant plot
where if inclined
they could live.