

Shaving a Dying Father

His old blade grates
over coarse stubble,
each nick trickling a memory:

Riding low in the seat of his Mack,
together in the cab of his silence;

A lashing with a leather belt,
the reason lost sooner than the welts;

Running away after a Mom bashing,
who goes farther, he or I?

A telling of his father's tale,
"I never left because he did."

Strange how the beard thickens
as his body withers
and memories soften
as the pain hardens.

- April 21, 1998