

# For Brother de Mik

*Dian Saderup*

Cupped in your papery palm the rose  
was like a wound, flowering.  
Your wife nodded when we brought it.  
*Yes, Papa, yes is pretty.* Then  
she put it in a bowl to float  
and wilt on water.

The light turned ruddy on your faces  
as we sat, the evening passing.  
You told me how it was to be  
a lithographer: *Grease and water*  
*not so friendly with each other,*  
*but I lace them up side to side*  
*on the stone, together they make*  
*my printings nice.* When I left  
the room was blue.

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Voice still resonant as rosewood,  
after the sickness came you told  
me about Holland and the Saints  
and marrying beautiful Marjorie. She  
brought us lebkuchen with sticky  
cherries on a slate-colored plate.  
When you ate a small piece she said,  
*See you can eat. Papa can eat.*  
She made you hold the gray plate  
on your knee.

Christmas Eve, the fire cast orange  
shadows on the alcoved walls. I  
brought a holly wreath. For the first  
time you did not rise when I came  
into the room. *Oh, not so well,*  
you answered me. I heard you breathe.  
*But that's the way of things. The Lord*  
*has always been good.* We watched  
the soundless television, a bluish  
flickering screen.

Today the sprays of roses, mums,  
carnations — red, orange, and yellow —  
banked the upturned, silver shining  
earth where you lay. *I trust my Jesus,*  
you once told me. *I'm just a man.*  
And cupped inside this darker day  
I grieve, the claret mystery  
of the cross, beside me here,  
in hiding.