

“Watercress Grows Best in Running Water”

—told me by my father

Dixie Partridge

Days after his death, I felt him
newly jovial alongside me. And weeks later,
when I again dreamed him young,
handing me a pail of watercress,
my mother said wistfully
she'd not yet seen him in dreams.

Until those last months, he lived so much outdoors
that the memories wash like watercolor—
as though light and growing fields, rain and wind
combine in him still, make remembrance
breathable and changing.

The undertow of my life runs one way,
and his ... not really the same,
more land and sky, reflected in ripples.
As we fall asleep on any shore, a lichen silence
covering our mouths and bodies,
the mind is the last to quiet,
as though we can never quite remember
what might save us—that desperate translation
that gives us up to dream.
Behind everything that happens
and every thought, there is that undying current,
and that loss.