

The Eulogy I Didn't Give (XXIV)

By Bob Hicok

My younger brother was afraid of thunder,
lightning. My father bought a recording of storms,
put it on the stereo, and rocked on the love seat
with my brother over and over,
until the sound meant comfort, warmth.

Much later, my brother became obsessed with meteorology
and dreamed of becoming a weatherman.

When I finally connected the early fear
with the later passion,
we were looking down at my father in his coffin.

Not my father but his body. More like an echo
of his flesh. No weather on his face.

I'd seen him often in a suit but never wearing a vest.

Pajamas would have made more sense.

The soft rain of the talking all around us
was a cocoon I wanted to live inside.

I heard the metronome of my heart
and thought of Quakers waiting for silence
to open its mouth. Of the hope
just below the surface of the phrase, keeping time.