

## Two Poems

### Clara Anderson-Cameron

#### Big dog

Takes a couple bites at the sun  
And goes home hungry  
Guards the stoop like a broke down soldier  
Sinks down to four knees and bleeds out the nose  
One dry bone or two to swallow  
And make use of  
Big scary dog with a few teeth  
That could do some real damage  
And the rest that flake away against a well-aimed stone  
Good dog knows his place  
between the biters and the bitten  
Knows his body's a shield  
Knows his eyes some windows  
Framed up nice  
Sees into heaven  
Sees a soft place for to rest

it comes in threes

I.

they're passing bites of grief down the table, I choke down what I can  
    *he died early this morning      suffering      other issues for*  
    *several years*  
a fresh haircut for the occasion, a handful of mints, the small sounds of  
    mourning  
    *a funeral      January      in New York*  
generations seated all in a row, my grandmother stares at her brother's  
body made to ash  
    *memories of playing      on the lumber piles down south of*  
    *Becida*  
behind her eyes, the way the crown of his head smelled, behind her  
    eyes, his eyes still  
blink back, wet and alive  
    *I forgot to let you know      Jean texted me Tuesday night*  
    *you were still at*  
    *my house      I was going to let her know      you can let her*  
    *know*

II.

death speaks every language, he's gone now but he was a boy some-  
where far away from here,  
barefoot in the green hills of Normandy  
    *we canoed out onto Turtle River Lake      a fire on the water*  
    *back on land*  
    *a big bonfire      sandwiches      cocoa*  
we gather and use our French for him, he is there as I conjugate my  
verbs with a stranger:  
être (to be), aller (to go), he is behind my shoulder saying: "on y  
va"  
    *was he      present in the flames?      a perfect way to send*  
    *him off*

many hands smooth over rough, woolen fabric, la ceinture fléchée, the  
last time we might feel  
him for now, his daughter smiles at me but it is not quite like her  
smile before

*I'd like to be there      I will be there*

III.

upon hearing the news, my father is five years old again and he is run-  
ning across the dewy yard,  
into the neighbor's bright, warm kitchen  
*died in his sleep      sometime during the night      unwell  
for quite some time*

you don't forget the ones who loved you, your body remembers the  
press of their hand  
*their daughter lives in Alberta      I talked to her twice  
on the phone*

is he young again, at the funeral table with potluck dishes sharing room  
on his plate, as the food  
sits like lead on the back of his tongue?  
*he loved him      more than his own two children*

there, the soft touch of something invisible, there, the assurance that  
love lasts so long,  
forever  
*our good friend      died today*

**Clara Anderson-Cameron** is a senior English student. The last four years have been spent surrounded by people who love words just as much as she does, and for that, she couldn't be more grateful.