

## TKO

I graced the chapel's entryway wearing black  
suit and tie and downturned lips. A frown fit  
for the pale-as-bone man inside  
the casket, supine and unmoving, loved  
all the same and more for it. I took my  
seat and it happened like this: I looked  
down at my balled fists and cufflinks glinting  
like unearthed stones in the fluorescents and

The head rush ceased as the sneer connected  
with the restless instinct of my nape. I obeyed  
and found hardly a gem and barely  
a brother, grinning with teeth like broken glass.

I couldn't stand the hymns or the pretending  
mimes preaching the promise of paradise. Sneer. They called it  
God's Country as if there was a place to ascend to  
after kidney failure. Grinning. I stopped short of my desire to excavate  
peace from the pulpit and its false prophets. Teeth like broken glass.  
I swallowed and decided that I couldn't stand  
sitting. So I stood. I couldn't stand anything

So I lunged and to this day I cannot  
tell you about the born-of-blood-red instinct,  
the leap, a horse's distance covered in seconds  
by a boy with golden wrists condemned and only  
survived by whatever is left after rage and grief are laid to rest.

It was a total knockout with ivory  
clattering and scarlet dew, like ripe rubies, against speckled tile  
and plush carpet only five paces from the  
chaos of longing turned violent.

That day, I buried my cufflinks and my brother's scavenged enamel in my grandpa's garden. I returned them to the earth, right next to where I imagined the dog's buried bone to be.