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The Visit

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THE VISIT

JOHN DAVIS

The day my grandfather visited me
from death, the sun was dark
as duckweed. He wore a necktie.
We sat on a porch humming folk songs.
He whispered that he didn't know the words
the way I whisper I don't know my life.
The willows were budding on the eastern rise.
He said I should plant rice in the damp lowland.

We talked of fine rain on sunflowers and irises.
He said he hated irises once because he had
to draw an iris, his state flower,
in art class by a woman with an accent
so deep she gurgled like a Chinese wine sack.
He said he didn't hate anything else
and I shouldn't hate him for dying
when my mother was two months old.

The wind wore the afternoon
like a puffy down coat.
Some days I am the pink periwinkle.
Some days I am the pink snow
getting dirty in the mud.
Some days my grandfather
visits me wearing an iris necktie.
Those days I watch it bloom.