



FATHER'S DAY +20

Greg Milo

Prose

Two cans of beer on smoothed stone. One cracked open. I take a slug. Wiping my mouth, I look onto a vast field pocked with headstones. An otherwise dead scene brought to life by the chipper birds and fidgety squirrels. The sun warms my skin, while my innards feel cold. My heart seems tired. It leans heavy against my ribs for support, and appreciates the ease of pumping alcohol-thinned blood. I take after my heart and settle against the headstone. I read the names of my neighbors, calculating their years and reminiscing what life was like when they were alive—different. Aged flowers lie wilted on recently dug earth. A stone angel looks down benevolently. A weak breeze dances with the leaves, and I look to the blue sky to access the calm, which makes me aware of the racing cars on the nearby highway, the sounds of the engines merging into one undulating drone. Another slug of beer and another and another and my surroundings soothe, like a softened focus in a portrait shoot. I toast my can in the air and pour the remaining drops onto the grass below. The second can stands alone, sweating onto the stone and casting a sliver of shadow. An ant investigates, and I click the second can open, allowing the ant a smidgen of beer. He seems unimpressed. It's not the best beer, just what the gas station had. I think about pouring the second can onto the grass for my dad, and I ask the ant, "Do the dead get drunk?". He shakes his head, and I agree and drink it myself.