

KERRIN MCCADDEN

Burial

The father will keep the son on ice,
keep him cold so the body will last the day,
the tractor spinning its wheels inside
the circular driveway, the bucket pulling
up the front yard, piling soil under
the box elders. The choir will sing
around his bed with us, and one man
will be a kind of clown, unable to make
any face but his frozen one so that he looks
like he is singing the tractor song
while we sing songs we don't know,
say words that sound like words
in songbooks until we play a game
of singing, sounding like we are praying
in tongues, but we will have to sing
or listen to the tractor out front, digging.
When the word is *Alleluia*, the room will ring,
the syllables clear to us like water at Nichols Pond.
You will think this is bad planning—the digging drone
underneath the song. Won't it be in poor taste,
the tractor blatting its own song in the front yard?
The tractor is a water strider in the front yard,
its legs like oars to each side, but it has nowhere
to go, it refuses to dig anywhere else,
sounding like a furnace in an old home.
You will speak over it, or sing, anything.
When the woodcock comes to circle the house,
someone will lower the pine box.
It will be so quiet then. It will be hard to believe
the woodcock's song doesn't come from its throat.