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# Weight Training

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## WEIGHT TRAINING

Twenty degrees—a hearse slims  
through the blue-dim snow. At the gravesite  
the fourteen-year-old waits

to carry his great-grandmother's casket.  
He is afraid of his hands slipping  
in the cold, afraid the ski gloves

his aunt offers will worsen  
his grip. Women are supposed to live  
longer but they do not in his family. Someday

his mother will die and he will have to choose  
her casket, his own heart hurtling  
toward its final career as a broken stone.

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Across the pastured marble  
the hearse treads snow, more quiet  
than silence. The boy's face is a field

blown clear of its usual exile  
and derision. He adjusts the black  
wool sweater purchased for the occasion, the tie

in its frowning collar, resists  
the urge to pump his knees up and down  
for warmth. This year he has grown

three inches, has learned the weight  
of a rival team's skinny tackle, of deer carcasses  
trussed with webbing, of early morning

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grain sacks for the family cow. But these  
are the wrong kinds of strength for now  
and he knows it. The boy tries

for the mute resolve of rafters. He considers  
the structure of his mother's hair holding  
steady against winter wind. The hearse stops

and subtracts its engine. He needs  
the angle of her face, her jawline,  
where sorrow is refracted.

*Now?* he asks, and pulls on the gloves.