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Grandfather

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GRANDFATHER JENNIFER HEUFT

Watching the sunset reflected
In his dusty tan glasses
Trying to commit to memory his words
Which he won't allow me to write down in his presence
He thinks my rendition would be good enough
I think he's completely full of it
I can't capture the truth that shines in his eyes
When he tells me about his grandmother
A tough little woman from Indiana
Who moved from mining town and then some
With her coalminer husband
She was so short, he said, that when he was twelve
(and grandma says he was a short twelve)
His grandmother could walk easily
Under his arm raised at the shoulder
His leather lined face crinkled with smiles
At the memory
This story began when he wanted to sing the praises
Of cast iron for cooking
And butter and bacon and grease
That led him to his grandmother, who cooked on a woodstove
And spent her days in the kitchen
Starting her mornings with a cup of warm water and sugar
(she said it got things started)
She overfed not only her family
But the railroad bums as well
They knew that if they walked along the tracks
She'd be sure to have warm food and a smile for them
Not only did her cast iron skillet feed the hungry
It served up justice, grandma style
One day his uncle Marion
True to form
Jumped up on the old wooden porch
While she was, where else, in the kitchen
And he let loose a rebel yell
You don't mess with grandma when she was cooking
She flung her skillet and knocked him clean off the porch
Things were simpler then
He said
We're so lucky now
He said