

Dead Parental Units

by Bill Yarrow

1.

Each death a sonnet, every grief
fourteen lines. Not yours. I refuse
you this one thing. I sat next to you
in the hospital, your mouth open
on one side, your last breath escaped.
I connect you with no other dead
or myself with the other weeping sons.
I am only this son, holding his father's
dead hand, watching his father's dead
mouth. I will not write you sonnets.
Sonnets are boxes. Spaces for pain.
Graves to lie in. Enough of graves.
I save for myself your raw last line.

2.

Another death, another sonnet. Every
grief fourteen fucking lines. Not yours.
I stood next to you in my sister's house,
the family huddled around like reporters
at a tornado. Terrified, we watched you
drown. At dawn, they wheeled you out.
Yes, mothers die and sons are sad,
but I am not one of the many. I am one
of the few who will not write you sonnets.
I'm sorry. Maybe that would have given you...
what? Solace? Satisfaction? Sonnets are boxes
—I mean coffins. You want me to build you
a coffin? How many coffins do you need?

