

## “Elegy: for My Soldier Father”

by Coredelia Hanemann

your death went unremarked  
until the day  
you did not speak

silk-lined casket  
your dress blues epaulets medals  
you scarcely resembled yourself

those dark-rimmed glasses  
as if to see something  
you had missed:

the you who retired into that sad  
cramped room closed doors  
listening to the gramophone moan

stacked beside the bed paltry paperback novels  
windows crusted over with soot  
and stale breath

soldier—made of flesh not tin  
not metal mettle a little  
be brave and you were

but not in the army-way  
soldiers cannot cry cannot mourn  
those they maim

camouflaged in fatigues  
undone by the man  
you were meant to have been

outdone your wars killed you  
not bullets not bayonets  
no sir un-kind-ness

you yes sir a stranger in your own  
life: only liquor neat balm for wounds  
forever raw

final days your eyes wide  
with desire seeing unable to speak  
paralyzed by the stroke of midnight.