

## My Father<sup>1</sup>

A tattered many labeled suitcase being packed for another trip  
“Say goodbye to your father, for he may not come back.”  
Letters to Mother from abroad, often a war zone.  
A framed Purple Heart with the bullet still attached hanging on his office wall

The comfort of his snoring, it means he’s home, safe.  
A cigarette dangling from his mouth, martini in hand  
Cussing out TV news programs as if he were there,  
His garrulous voice, raised in argument, which he called debate.

Looking for his tall, lean, gaunt figure in news broadcasts, taking notes.  
Watching him proudly on “Meet the Press” and “Face the Nation”  
Mom and I on an airplane to meet with him on another adventure -  
New Delhi, India; London, England

Longs talks through the night, ancient history, modern times  
Emergency phone calls at midnight, sometimes from the President’s aides  
The sound of typewriter tapping late into the night  
A bedtime story of his mother’s ancestors, the Morgans of Wales.

His solace, the land, his garden, the woods  
A Lightning struck tree, throwing him to the ground  
The waves curling over us in the Atlantic Ocean  
His arm around my waist as we looked out to sea.

Father pulling up a cactus single handed from the ground on his last night,  
Telling mother, “There’s nothing more I can do out there.”  
A battered old black Royal typewriter  
that he bequeathed to me with a mission – to write.

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<sup>1</sup> Phil Potter of the Baltimore Sun