



Lee

In our final conversation
Before dementia took his mind
My father out of nowhere
counted to ten in the Italian
He learned from a fellow soldier
Before the end of the second world war

Hospice said to get back fast
Five days I'd come to his bedside
Asked him to blink if he heard me
He blinked only once
I stayed until Delehanty's came with the body bag
He didn't want anyone to see him gone.

He was one of the wild boys
Iowa coal miner hillbillies who after the war
would not go back down the hole.
They fled to boomtown Rockford
apprentice machinists working metal to fit a hair width
then loving the girls, the Cubs and Pabst Blue Ribbon.

Walked the picket line in '66 for IAM Local 1553
Stood in line for Government cheese a sixty day strike
Coached the kids Cub scout softball Pack 396
Never got near the inside of a church
Saturday haircut at Jim and Pat's
Beer and a bump at Rocky's before walking home.