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ON THE FIRST ANNIVERSARY
OF MY FATHER’S DEATH

Lukas Sherman

The first anniversary of my father’s death, February 20th, is a Monday. Presidents’ Day. And I have it off. I sleep in, take a long shower, say a quick prayer (“console us who mourn”), dress. Outside it’s cool, overcast, and still. A few birds chirp. The sun is pale in the gray skies. I think of the movie I watched last night, of snow and rage and death, and walk the few blocks to Division for breakfast.

Black coffee, a potato scramble, toast, the gentle music that reminds me of an ex-girlfriend, one my dad liked. It was a Sunday last year and I was at the Coast. It was sunny and warm and the phone call from my mom seemed unreal, even if expected. As did his dead body in the living room. Fifty-six was much too young. It always will be.

I want to somehow mark this day, somehow do something meaningful. I look at pictures from better times (how young he looks in 1999), listen to music he liked, wonder if the sand in my sweatshirt pockets is from that day. I don’t know what my mom and siblings are doing today. I have ashes I will scatter later.

It doesn’t feel much different, a year later. People never tire of telling you that life goes on. It doesn’t mean it gets better though, it doesn’t mean that the loss is not ever absent. It doesn’t mean...