My blood boils

Gabrielle Grilli

quick like caramel, burnt in an instant
or dissolved slowly it hurts
the way it bubbles and browns inside—tastes
like copper in a bitten cheek, boils over
to conceal the loss of a father
I see and smell and taste that manifests
in deep belly laughter, coffee light with creamer,
graying hair, the smell of mechanics & Marlborol Lights,
old tennis balls, cereal at night, spoonfulls of peanut butter
straight from the jar, and scraping the ice cream bowl—
how my blood boils thick & makes me bitter, hot, I am sorry
for what I cannot get back, sticky with an ache
that remains like a pebble between toes.

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