

Graduation Day Spirits

For Sam Walker

Then I laughed and said he's here
kidding about my dead father, your grandfather.
— oh! wild turkeys are gobbling out back
now one is in the birdbath! —
Anyway, I almost, well not really, meant it.

But isn't it funny or maybe odd or something
how right there, meaning here,
a dead person can seem?
It works fine for us skeptics to think
this one or that one lives on in some of us
— gobble gobble the turkeys are verbose! —
that's easy to swallow, but what I started to say
was that I felt — one is yelping now —
my father close. It's hard
to write about this, and talking's even worse.

Your grandfather,
maybe he was listening to your Salutatory speech.
When you said Love the dialogue
maybe, wild with pride, he broke into a grin.
Maybe Whitman was with him.
Maybe Walt began to sweat like a live man
when you said celebrate.

The wild turkeys are parading down the hill now,
their squawks barely audible.
Now they've vanished into the high green grass.