

Poem with Two Graves

One plot for me, one plot for you. Father
how did we come to share this dirt

side-by-side working through our stupid?
I've been given reasons to loosen

white anger from my chest.
The arguments, clinical & spirit

cleansing, always come from the best women
in my life & are bracketed with cloves

of garlic, to kill the monster in me
that refuses to die. O they mean well

the women I loved for any reason

that pushed me to hustle harder, harder
until I built a manhood out of bass

& strange absence. *Hey, you! Get off my cloud!*
You were in town, yet somehow a phantom

smoking your cigarettes, borrowing cash
& still you gave me your reckless heart. I plotted

I schemed I bagged & I weighed the contents
of evening, as if moon were market-

place & pitch-black held my freedom.
There were lessons I blazed through until dawn

tossed me upon its scale & stretched its mouth
around my head. First, only gums. I was too slick.

Then, the growth of razored teeth that held me
until one evening i found myself covered

permanently in night. This was my inheritance:
this damp dirt covering my face & you

lying parallel, still charged up & red-
faced over my mother leaving you.

We put ourselves here, yes, I remember

clearly the scenes & sixteens that raised me
into this jungle: "Ten Crack Commandments"

American Gangster & the dopeboy
vernacular you so hated.

To dig myself out of this cold grave
will be difficult, but not impossible.

No, I can't stay here next to you
in these plots we don't own. It won't

be barren, your body's new home. There will be
flowers from your daughter, coins from your sons.

Every now & then I'll send you postcards
from all the wild places you'll never see.