**Room After Room**

Lew Forester

Torn by war, my father craved

beauty he couldn’t afford.

I once followed him through

a Chinese pottery store, moving

room to room, through

Tang, Yuan, Song dynasties.

I was spellbound by a ceramic

pot, painted with dancing nudes

and strange birds that carried off

parts of my childhood.

It was there I lost my father

until finding him in another room,

browsing the Ming Dynasty.

I was forty when Father’s aorta

exploded & he bled out within.

Burial plans were discussed

while his empty robe lounged

in his chair. I envisioned his ashes

in a Chinese porcelain pot

but others could only see dirt.

As the chalk moon walked

through the gloomy night

I fell into a dream—

following my father through room

after room of beautiful things

until I lost him for good.