

SUNSHINE GLENSTONE

The Injury

My memory of my father is that he sat in the parlor
and by the time I got home I knew he had sat through the afternoon
watching one or two titles lit by the sun about to set.
He arranged his books and rearranged, read and reread.

We whispered to visitors about the pain he was in as we led them
to the kitchen, the only warm place, with the stove going.

My uncles, when they came in from the fields,
went to the kitchen and stayed. They put off going upstairs
where the glass of water they took to bed would freeze by morning.
We managed not to say what we wondered, if maybe his temperament
was suited more to read and have one drink a night
instead of the life my uncles led. The vet probably could've maneuvered the leg
back into the socket, though at the time, before the '20s,
it seemed nothing could be done, the thigh bone jammed
through the pelvis, one leg four inches shorter than the other.
Whatever his pleasure, I don't doubt but that he paid for it,
and I suppose to our mind, that made his pastime acceptable.
You're in school, he would say, but I couldn't divide
my time equally even if I'd wanted to. There were crops and milking
and no break from either. You asked was it a happy home.
Even being used to it, I can't say it wasn't hard.
I suppose we were all happier in summer.