

Richard Lapidus

COMFORT

While slowing down for the Miami Beach gin rummy team,
I somehow remembered to seem

happy that the surprise yellow something-or-other
(I suspect a sweater)

my grandmother had sewn, fit.
My grandfather couldn't make it

for lunch (he happened to be dead,
rather peeved at not being fed

his caviar and canapés—fish eggs and can-of-peas
was what he always said to me).

In the hey-day of being alive,
Grandpa ran hootch, stopping for nova and chives

at the Carnegie Deli. Canada to New York to Virginia Beach,
where retired sailors drank orange and peach

schnapps on New Year's Eve, saluting
women who stopped loving them in Beijing, or was it Peking?

When the phone calls stopped, Grandpa
was there with triple sec, lime juice and shots of vodka.

Those sailors, mired in their schooners,
clinging to each other like honeymooners,

were old enough to recall what I don't remember,
was it Signor Marconi or Alex Bell who was the inventor?

When I think about heaven, it's a bed and breakfast
overlooking the ocean, three-masted

ships still whaling the eastern coast,
remarkable room service, absolutely smashing coffee and toast.