

His Presence

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I.

Said suffered from hypertension but
Died of a cute narcissism, the *Everlast* salesman smile—
One less son of an elastic fortune.
Darling daughter wept, mother drank.

II.

Station wagon careened on the switchback mountain homestretch,
Sister in front, sister in back, insurance salesman driving, then
Dead from a snapped neck; sister in front sucked into Venus's cloud.
Reclaimed sister wept.

III.

Wizard on the high floor at the *Sperry* Corporation,
Consulted by lesser Fellows and distinguished grunts,
Leaves three sisters between eight and twelve divorced,
Monthly support, penciled weekends, and cameo quarrels with mother to follow.

No cacciatore dinner stories or charming uncles
Capture the lessons learned and daily missteps of the missing parent.
No older sisters and their exemplary husbands
Inform off-again courtships and short marriages.
We are our fathers' daughters: skin-deep, abrupt experience, faded memory.