

**I'll never write a love poem**

by Lou Terlikowski

My grandmother obsessively cleans her floors and grows agitated  
when someone remarks on this fact.

My grandfather smokes grass in his garage. Remembers the days  
before the divorce and those after his second wife's Lap Band surgery.

I agree to their do-not-repeat-that's because it makes them brim over  
with love and loss of love and I wonder how they didn't grow  
too tired to try again.

Spring breathes on the heels of winter and threatens to kiss or kill  
and like war, there is death and growth and the need to run.

What is the point of it all? Is there one?  
Even if you knew, you couldn't know for sure.

While I'm sleeping, I receive a voicemail reminding me  
my brother's wedding is Saturday and his fiancé needs false eyelashes,  
two cheese balls, and no vegetable platter.

That's just how boys are. That's what my mother said.  
It plays over and over, sweat on my skin.

Wednesday evening, sitting on an unmade bed, alone,  
surrounded by melted cough drops and empty bottles,  
surrounded by the quiet whirl of the heater.

Outside, someone slams a car door and complains  
about someone else's parking.

I lie still and stare at messy paint on the ceiling  
with the hopes that tonight's date will not show.