

Before the Eulogy

by Ashley Crout

The cat hangs awful on the screen door, crying like a stiff hinge.
We watch the stopped clock tell the correct time twice.
My mother stitches and unstitches her fingers.
She wishes to sew them into an impassable fist.

We stare down the stopped clock. It tells the correct time twice.
He dies within an unmarked hour. His chest only exhales.
My mother tries to stitch her fingers into an impassable fist.
Our bodies diminish with grief. There is nothing to say.

He exits his life some unmarked hour. His chest falls still.
I can't think of one good thing to say about my mother's father.
Our bodies diminish with grief. There are no words in our mouths.
I've held my pen two inches above the page for days.

I'd be lying if I said one good thing about my mother's father.
I'll imitate his preacher, bullshit about some nice guy and his god.
I'm holding my pen two inches above the page. There's nothing to say.
The cat cries like a stiff hinge. Awful hangs all over us.