

## Picking Up My Crying Father at the Airport

1.

Never had I watched or created  
A scene so memorable as when my father  
Sat crying at the airport curb, his ears filled with bloody cotton,  
My brother and I watched, more curious than scared,  
Our mother helping him into the car.

2.

The flurries fell as slowly as the silent  
Businessmen who quietly passed my  
Injured father like the woman who knew CPR but rode past the man collapsed  
behind his lawnmower, because, well, the ambulance would be there soon.  
There was no interest, no time to stop for a crying  
Middle-aged man who had just lost  
His hearing.

3.

Inside the car, my father leaned forward, heavy against the dashboard,  
Holding his ears, my mother, upright and frightened to drive at night,  
Holding her tears, like the brave child, chin up, before the injection,  
She drives down the icy airport ramp,  
Unable to respond to the questions that came  
From the back seat.

4.

My father's crying stopped but his hearing never returned.  
A plane bound from Chicago to Columbus depressurized  
At 28,000 feet, cruelly propelling  
His eardrums toward the stars—an uncommon occurrence  
For an uncommon man.