

## Sorting, In Evening Light

I attach a place and season  
to the magazine photo of a man with gray,  
stubbled face, saved with clippings of others:  
old milk cans and barns in contrast  
with the space-age classic of earth  
that day man stepped on the moon  
and looked back.

For a time I leave off lamps,  
let dusk settle over the whiskered face  
like a faint texture of suede  
in old family albums.  
His hat has been battered  
by sun and rainy weather.  
Great-grandfather had the same skin—  
once browned, later soft,  
almost transparent. He often hummed  
when I was in the room, almost never spoke.

I've made assumptions  
about the man in the photo.  
He was always poor, but  
has no debt. He's not traveled  
many miles from home . . . has no home  
any longer. If he notices this,  
his eyes don't tell.  
They are amber and like a dance  
caught on film as they look out  
over harvested fields bright as the moon.

No such scenery is in the photograph . . .  
only the hat, the face with faint beard,  
and at a lower corner the long-fingered hands  
where they rest on a plain wood cane  
and do not tremble.

—Dixie Partridge