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Grandfather to Grandson

Mario Suško

you will not remember much
about me
a thought here and there
struggling to become
an image
occasional snapshots will make
even more confusing

whenever you set your electric train
in motion, it was
the train of my exile
I had to forget all over again
my numb fingers
holding onto the air

you threw your stuffed sad-eyed dog
off the bed and shot it with your water gun,
and when I feigned tears
you said, Don't worry, it's not real.
Here, you can have it back.

I let you win all the wars,
your toy soldiers advance
to my side of the carpet
with tanks and trucks,
knocking down my block houses,
trees and signposts, leaving me homeless
with a big unbeatable smile on my lips

every day after five you went home
to carry on your conquests:
was I even there a worthy adversary,
though the following morning you ran
toward me, your arms open, yelling,
Grandpa, I want to play with you,

your little hand clutching a shiny fighter jet

on weekends, sitting in the safest corner
of the room, I have often stolen
your imagination to test my resolve to live,
the playful dying was a way out,
a merciful moment of relief, though I
won't be around for you to realize
you fought all along a dead man.

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