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## There Is Less and Less Space

Amir Brka

The earth has done its work.
We wouldn't have thought it,
my brother and I,
but a friend said to us
"Your father's gotten slimmer."
"Huh?"
"His grave is sinking in!"

We went to the gravedigger to order the gravestone. "Don't worry," he said, "everything will be just right."

But we wanted a solid gravestone, cost didn't matter to us. "Don't you worry, this one is good, this is marble, lasts forever."

Then we went to dig the foundation, and brought cement and gravel.

"Watch out, don't dig so close," the gravedigger said, "or you might run into bones."

Well, though a year has passed, the earth still needs more.

How much time does it need? So we backed away and made a big effort, it's not as easy as people often think. On father's gravestone it said that he was a tourist; he'd traveled to Mecca.

I thought, is that necessary?
Not to travel, but to write such an inscription.

And I thought of father's knotty toes, and backed away further from the grave. The gravedigger brought me back.

The man had unbearably green eyes.

I don't know what my brother thought. He kept quiet and smoked as he was digging.

While we paused, having a beer: "We were sloppy," my brother said.

Yeah, but we'll get better, this is the first father we've ever buried. Now we've got experience, I said to my brother.

Father never buried any father of his own: he thought life was Good Field – our old hometown. But when death approached, nevertheless, he felt Evil coming.

"Do you see that beauty?" he said to me.
"Take a good look, my son!

Nothing of that you can see when you're dead."

He'd come to doubt therefore everything else except the body in which he never had really believed.

And he asked us, accordingly, to choose for his coffin's cover as thick lumber as we could and let him see it right away – while he still had eyes.

I couldn't do anything about it, (more precisely: nothing).

Then he went himself to the undertaker.

"Time for me to go," he replied when anyone asked where he was headed.

Till then he thought that he knew.

Now I think that it was true when Schopenhauer said it's a bigger sin to give birth than to kill.

Though he got called a defeatist for it.

Pascal also holds that a pessimist is an optimist who thinks.

Mother came to check out our work, then went home by herself.
"She'll cry," brother said,
"Let's go to her."
I couldn't.
He didn't understand me and stayed with me

till morning
to explain
what a fuck up
I actually was.
He only stopped
when I asked him
from what standpoint
he was condemning me;
from the graveyard perhaps?

The graveyard, anyway, is expanding faster and faster, as I noticed.

I thought some more about how one day without fail unless something significant changes we'll run out of space, and then because of that the future decisive struggle will be between the dead and the living. And I could already tell among the second category there will be more and more traitors.

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