

To a Former Student Training to Become an Interrogator

DAVID O'CONNELL

They say pressure isn't torture
and, at times, because I don't know better
I'm willing to agree
as I'm willing to believe
across the steadily warming globe they live
to kill our people.

I told you
just months ago, in literature,
unlike life, everything happens for a reason

as you struggled through Act III, scene iv, *Macbeth*,
our hero-villain shocked by a ghost of his own making,
and, again, again, I asked,

what does he mean?

. . .the worm that's fled

Hath nature that in time will venom breed,

and

. . .never shake / Thy gory locks at me.

After those photos (stacked bodies, dogs, electrodes, hoods)
and month-by-month the rumors of something darker
done in our name, I can't fathom your decision,

though I remember the affable grin
when the difficult text
clicked, and I can almost see your face
turned toward that shadowed other.