Homecoming
*SUSAN CLAYTON-GOLDSMIR*

A father hangs small clothes in the trees
believing his dead son
will find them, dress up
and come home for dinner.
His hands, fingers lost to the war,
struggle to pin cloth blossoms
on the branches
dangling in front of the sun like his hope.
He doesn’t know, even if he could,
this son would not wear
those clothes again.

No longer rooted
in his memory,
details of this life and death
have tumbled backwards
through the blue spaces
of his years like dried weeds.
Ground loosened between them
the dust falls —
white as the souls of his children —
white as their bones.
An old man now
he sets the table and waits
under the stained-glass window
for the dying to be done.
While the sun,
lowered in the western sky,
gathers the colored panes,
softly places them,
like a ring of flowers,
on the linen cloth
beneath this father's hands.