Of All the Dead That Have Come to Me, This Once

I have never written against the dead. I would open my shirt to them and say yes, the white cones still making sugary milk,

but when Grandfather's gold pocketwatch came in by air over the Rockies, over the dark yellow of the fields and the black rivers, with Grandmother's blank face pressed against his name in the back,

I thought of how he put the empty plate in front of my sister, turned out the lights after supper, sat in the black room with the fire, the light of the flames flashing in his glass eye in that cabin where he taught my father how to do what he did to me, and I said

No. I said Let this one be dead. Let the fall he made through that glass roof, splintering, turning, the great shanks and slices of glass in the air, be his last appearance here.