“Tribute: for my grandfather”

This kind of silence comes only at moments of goodbye.   
  
you are mowing the lawn again,   
your shoes and socks  
forgotten on the bottom step of your porch,   
  
I will remember you for your feet:   
dirt underneath each jagged nail  
like evidence that you are on earth   
and unashamed to be here.   
  
your soul stained green with freshly cut grass,   
more than pastime  
 you allow yourself to be renewed with each   
session of landscaping.   
  
today,   
you are the light playing on the pane of every window,   
orange like the sherbet melted on my chin from the push-pop  
you gave me.   
It is summer, and the only memory I have of being a child   
is in your backyard, baking in the sun,   
anxious mostly about the water   
and whether or not I’ll make it to the dock of your neighborhood’s lake   
without drowning, and I do.   
  
I am convinced you would not have had it any other way as you lead the parade back to  
your manicured lawn,   
the sun setting on the shingles  
of your garage.

I carry you   
like a bookmark  
pressed between the grainy pages of   
my unfinished notebooks,   
each new chapter greeted with your face,   
my orange chin,   
the lake before sundown,   
and silence  
saved only for moments   
like these.  
  
  
I only wish my feet will grow to be as dirty.