

Atheism

Stephen O'Connor

The night my father died
I walked out onto the lawn

and talked to the stars.
If there was beauty

in a grown man addressing
four or five bright motes

picked from the dizzying
plenty of a clear night

in July, I didn't feel it. Perhaps,
had I been eloquent—

There was so much I had wanted
to say ... After six words

I fell silent, and soon wondered
why I was standing

barefoot
on that wet lawn.

And then I was gone,
leaving grass blades

disarrayed, and the sky,
less like a canopy

than a canopy ripped
away, and high

in the night's constant
enlargement, those bright

motes floating,
sending news of their burning

across so many millions
of years.