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To My Biological Father: a Pantoum

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I only knew the bad things about you,
like how you threw mother against a wall,
I never had a chance to really know you
because my mother kicked you out.

You threw my mother against a wall
and who knows what else she never told me.
After mother kicked you out
she ripped pages from my baby book.

Who knows what else you did
that made her destroy the pictures of you?
She ripped whole pages from my baby book
I didn't even know what you looked like.

What made her destroy pictures of you
and never tell me you had other children.
I didn't even know what you looked like
or what kind of father you would be

until years later when I met your other children—
two grown half-brothers—
and learned you could be a kind father.
They said they knew you loved me.

Now I have two grown half-brothers
who say they know you loved me
though I never had a chance to know you
and had only known the bad things.

The Hand That Nurtures, Color Photography and Collaging _ Alyssa Ferraro,
Basilica, Original Sculpture _ Daniel Popper