

Little Button

The cost of my attendance at funerals is a single button, pulled from the lapel of the death of the party. I am connected to the planet by a single thread. That thread is contained in a mason jar on the squat table next to my bed, intertwined through the eyes of little plastic impostors, clinking to rest with what remains of my father.

The buttons do not sleep alone.

It's been thirty years since my father was buried, without either of his little buttons. That plastic impostor remains, but connected to me instead of taking my place on my father's collarbone.

When I turned away from him, as silent as the ground he was lowered into, I felt untethered. I was a wisp of dandelion seed, floating on breezes and currents out of my control toward an unforeseen landing site. I am still waiting to hit fruitless pavement.

He didn't need his Little Button anymore.

It was always me that was his Little Button, not this plastic impostor; I was the anxious child that couldn't be without her father, couldn't be alone in the dark or the grocery store, couldn't exist without clasping his shirt with a clammy fist or with arms strung around his neck like heavy chain. But in the wake of his death it wasn't me that was permitted to hold onto him anymore; instead, this little plastic circle with empty, threaded eye-holes took my place.

I pulled the button off my father's lapel because it should have been me clinging to his neck as he lay still and painted in his casket. I am attached to him by more than thread.