

“An Elegy for Dust”

by

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...for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.
- Genesis 3:19b, KJV

Man was born of dust, they say; I believe.
His face was always streaked with dirt and sweat,
his hands roughened by the tools of his trade.

He told me once, *I wish to be scattered.*
It was a fitting end for a free soul
that could never be contained by cold earth.

After he died, I held my grandfather,
in my hands held my grandfather's ashes,
and I spread my grandfather to the wind.

He is under my fingernails, I thought
and my tears were slightly hysterical.
He is the dust in the cracks in my skin.

Unbidden, my grey fingers moved themselves
and on my forehead left the mark of grief;
an early Ash Wednesday, ritual of loss.