

**TIMOTHY J. FITZMAURICE**

**Honey and Darlin**

The carcasses were there wrapped in tinfoil  
just where Harold had said they'd be.  
It had been three weeks since his call,  
describing the knoll in the backyard so recently his  
and what was buried there. The kids watched  
from the house as our father dug, awkwardly and uncertain.

We giggled at the insanity of it, the incongruity:  
our father in his undershirt, elbow deep in earth,  
and a handkerchief tied to his face like a thief. He knelt,  
reached into the ground and pulled up in his arms  
first one stiff heap of canine, then another, and stacked them  
on an old pull wagon Harold had built and left.

Our father towed the hearse across the lawn,  
losing the top body two or three times. He left them  
glittering like baked potatoes at the end of the driveway  
the farthest our father would allow Harold since the closing.  
He was late, of course, and by afternoon we could smell them  
from the garage at fifty feet. By morning, the wagon

was empty, but our father, always a queasy sort of man,  
didn't fill in the holes right away because of the maggots.  
Left open for near a week, the graves were like eye sockets,  
gouged out and watching me at my bedroom window at night.  
Left open, that is, until Harold called again  
not to thank but to ask about his horse, Mabel,

buried somewhere in the vicinity. That's when our father,  
just after dawn, went out before work, necktie  
and shirt sleeves, and closed up the gashes in his yard.  
Tipped the earth back and sealed off  
whatever could make a man ask another man  
to disturb the dead.