Small Craft Advisory

Thomas Mitchell
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Father died before my memory. The house was swallowed in a new light, a kind of glory that works on you like a sharp knife, cuts into you and carves all that you are, all that you will ever be.

Mornings, it was so much night. The kitchen window darkening the eastern hills. My brother diving into his dreams. My mother’s light, the lamp’s deep shade. The white runs slowly from her fingers. How the house lies.

The music is forever. Chopin, I think. She smiles at her fingers, her flying hands soft like aviation. Even at this distance, she looks beautiful. Think of her like this for the next twenty years. Now return to the kitchen lamp, a colored picture postcard, the TV on the blink. It only takes a little time.

Time is like a Buick in perfect tune. Driving the dark, the starter whines, the engine catches and roars, the light makes the great trees stand out beard to beard across the lawn. A small metal virgin stands on the moon of the dashboard.

At 55 I begin to age. Whole towns pass by. Same memory, same picture. The seat worn through to the springs, moths knocking at the windows. Still, I move the throttle further. I’m going home.