Father's Day

In the two weeks he went sober we drank coffee
cleaned the house
went down to the unemployment office
together

Growing up, the local cops knew our names…
Fighting occurred often in our family
It was our religion
every month, we had to sacrifice our father
take a pot to his head & lay the drunk man out

the sirens, the tears, the AA classes, court hearings, evictions…
never changed much…

there were times I could beat him sober for days
never long enough to get to know him, beyond the alcoholic,
who came around to basketball games screaming,
"that'ssssss mm-ma-my booooyyy"
My father,
laid passed out on the neighbors yard
The lawn ornament relocating itself every week
My father; the drunk

We fought toe and toe, knuckle to knuckle
after 22years, I decided to work things out
I tried to understand why my father had so much anger,
Released…at the twist of a cap
For 3years I didn't swing on the man… until this morning
A loud thump off the wall, a jaw hung open, my mother
Laid out across the floor, the pain, wrinkling her face

Flash!!
I remember, the time he brought her to her knees
His hands locked around her arm like the jaws of a pit bull
So like any dog owner I chopped him in the throat
No air, no power

I breathe back into the moment as my father stands; under the dim kitchen light
with liquor splashing behind his yellow eyes…
How could you push her like that?
Your own wife, my mother

I flash again to the day he punched her, she hits the floor
My brothers and I flocked around mommy
Like birds do, when a nest falls from its tree,
praying she'd wake up

I breathe back into the moment
Back into his yellow, eyes, and Jab!
A quick stab to the mid section, his airbag is empty
He swings back, the bell has rung, we're at it again
                Mother cheers me on!
His bottom lip splits open
Blood stained drool he tries to catch with his tongue
                uuugghhh I'll kill you
I hear the crowd going wild as I shuffle around his flimsy swings
A knee to sternum
His body falls limp, but there is no referee to stop me

I'm in love with the sound of knuckles hitting flesh...

The aching beauty of a cue ball cracking the rack at the break
Crack you like that…. "Crack" 'Iiiiiee', like that
Addicted to adrenaline
Holding 25years of messed up childhood in my fist
His tattered body, lay as if he had no bones left
I kicked it, I stomped it, I punt his head into the refrigerator
More concerned about the door then head, that dented it

My mother is crying again…

I drag what is left of my father into the empty hallway
At the sink I loosen my knuckles…
rinse our African blood from my hands
I watch my dignity and anger swirl… towards the mouth of the basin

I'm late for my train!

Outside the building, I am greeted by a lovely custodian lady
who can never say my name right

"Hello Aiggy, how you"
I smile, "I'm fine"?

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