

**Owning Grandfather's Death**  
**SUSANNA RICH**

Grandmother hasn't seen him in twenty years—  
he drank, yelled, didn't know  
how to talk to a woman.  
He took their son Muki with him,  
forced him to start working  
when he was thirteen.

Fourth of July, Grandfather crossed the street  
for *The Herald News* that taught him English,  
and his daily Pall Malls, Almond Joy.

He lingers at the QuickChek,  
buys gum (that treat American soldiers  
gave him in 1945)—cupcakes, comic books,  
little flags for the kids next door.  
Crossing back, he is run down by a car,  
thuds on the hood into the windshield.

His mouth is hooked by plastic tubes,  
legs raised in casts, his head  
bandaged like a mummy's.  
His left foot throbs in my hand.  
He is warm. Too warm.

His wake, Grandmother sits in the back  
sobbing, calling *Pishta, Pishta, Pishtúkám*—  
turns to the women from his senior center  
where he played pinochle,  
tells anyone in her broken English  
how he rescued her when Russia  
invaded Hungary, how he truly  
was a good man,  
how grateful she is.

Uncle Muki asks me to lead her out,  
so he can kneel quietly by his father.