

Courage
(for Great Grampa)

I would sit on his 90-year-old knee, six inches from the pushcart and tv.
For hours, we'd watch Jerry escape all Tom's traps,
And every time, he'd always laugh,

Thata gatto, neva gonna catcha thata suricillo.

One time at the end of Yankee Doodle Mouse, Tom exploded
In a rocket's red glare that lit up the tv night sky with Old Glory
And he, far from sly, still sprang to his feet with me
In his left arm and his right hand glued to his head
In salute, then Jerry flashed on the screen in the same pose
(minus me). Not long after and probably too young to hear
My father told me how Great Grandpa had been listed KIA—
Trapped in Noman's land under his dead horse for three days.
No matter how hard I've tried, I've never been able to conceive
Of the combination of horror, disgust, boredom, and pain
That proceeded the moment he sprang free.

So, when I think I'm down and out and had enough
My mind lunges at the smell of earth, ordinance, horse, and blood
And I remember I owe it to him more than I owe it to myself
To have courage, and keep my head up
And be sure *Thata gatto, neva gonna catcha thisa suricillo!*