

Save Our Souls

Carol Lynn Grellas

*—for my father, Herbie
Golden Gate National Cemetery*

When the soldier doesn't come home
the dog sleeps on his bed,
waits like an abandoned shadow
for a body that will never return.

Weeks later, his wife visits the cemetery—
reads love letters and stares
at a single black crow hovering
above her husband's grassy tomb.

She carefully places a golden letter H
crossways between three dandelions
and a tuft of fallen leaves. They bend
from the weight, the first initial of his name

as if the universe can't bear the burden
and bows to the heaviness of death—
his life has become an ellipsis she holds
in her hand, like an acronym placed

in a grave. She kneels gently on the carved
headstone, outlines a figure eight with her
middle finger. This is thievery, cries the woman
without a husband. This is thievery, mocks

the crow with a golden letter H hanging
from his beak. The trees rustle in the wind,
she feels her husband tapping from six
feet under. Morse code SOS ... — — — ...

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