

BILL GARVEY

KAHLIL

Grandfather, a thousand thank yous for the afternoon  
you caught me in the basement smoking hashish  
from a small golden pipe, not because you never told  
my parents, but for your laugh, because I looked frightened  
or high, because I took you away from Springfield,  
returned you to Beirut for the joyous moment smoke  
hung thick as phlegm in the damp air, returned you  
to a circle of men in the shade of an alley, or huddled  
in some cafe around the gurgling of a hookah pipe,  
for your prominent nose sniffing like a wine connoisseur,  
for your dark gentle hands reaching for, then cradling the pipe,  
the way you pressed it to your lips tender as a kiss,  
drew smoke into your mouth, eyes closed, breath held,  
for smoke huffing from your enormous nostrils as though God  
created them especially to exhale the exhaust of hashish,  
for returning the pipe to me, to my lonely buzz  
in the basement while you stepped up the stairs slowly,  
shut the door, for your footsteps I still hear above me.