

THIS POEM

Before the age of doing
and photographing and filming
and texting what you did,
back when people simply did,
a girl got married at seventeen,

recalled tonight under lamplight
in an Ozark farmhouse by my old,
widowed Aunt Dot, the woman
who once was her. There were no
photos of the girl as she waited

in the truck with her first
two babies for her husband
to come out of the bar
until it was dark, and then
in the dark. Nobody filmed him

at the screen door of the kitchen,
waking from the spell
of his anger with a lead pipe
in his hand saying, "I believe
I killed that cow," or filmed her

stepping between his fists
and her son on the night he broke
her nose. Literal, plainspoken
and sorrowful, Dot seems
to find her, the poor young girl,

married for life, and him, my uncle,
the good old boy everyone loved,
including me, in the shadows
cast by her lamp and chair,
just the three of them there,

and me, and the small,
hand-held device of this poem.