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Hartman Cemetery, January, 1980

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Hartman Cemetery, January, 1980

How mechanical the casket roller
And the one-way catches that click
Shut to hold the railed box so tight.

Six strong sons of sons
Lift equally the dead weight—
Six hundred pounds of flesh
And its accruements.

The undertaker utters quiet advice
To six living,
Advice as smooth and perfect
As the muffled
Motors which
Whirr him into
How regular a hole.

There is no spirit in it,
Except for a chilly wind
Which whisks
The preacher's
Benedicte
To heaven.

Robert J. De Smith