Home for the holidays

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Your hug wasn't your hug. Your
left arm didn't encircle me as tightly, and the
left side of your smile didn't arch upward
as completely.

There was a part of me standing
there in your limp and awkward hug that
suddenly remembered when I was a little girl
and I would stand on the tops of your feet
and we would slow dance around the kitchen.

We sit at the kitchen counter now
and eat chocolate chip cookies
and you forget to wipe away the crumbs on the
left side of your mouth
the same way you forgot to shave the
left side of your face
this morning.

I wonder what else you have forgotten.
To take the trash out. To pay the bills.
To throw a curve ball. To keep those promises
that you'd teach me how to sail.
My birthday.
My name.

And as I sit there,
dipping my chocolate chip cookie into a big glass of milk,
I wonder if there's only half of you
left that still loves me.

I fix your collar.
Then I brush the crumbs off your face.

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