Landfill Michael Blaine

For *Jeremiah* 25110 Holly Road

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*“For I know the plans to prosper you and not to harm* michaelblaine@juno.com *you, plans to give you hope and a future.”*

I

It’s a moral thing

someone killed overseas

fighting for our country

not wanting them buried

— any part of them—

in a landfill

The traces of soldiers killed

recovered

from bomb blasts

get stacked in morgue

coolers for months

or years

fragments that could not

undergo DNA testing

because they are badly burned

or damaged in explosions

They are cremated and incinerated

The subsequent remains

authorized by paperless forms

where relatives had stipulated

They did not wish to be notified

if additional remains were identified

appropriate disposition

Could be made to dispose of the residue

Boxes of sealed containers

Certified as Medical waste

Hauled to the King George landfill

But buried in a dignified

and respectful manner

II

Once my brother-in-law

The back of his arms

tatted USMC on the left

KUNZ down the other

blue eyed and beer buzzed

was surrounded

after a party

after most had gone

We begged him stories of the war

then snatched at the fragments

that slipped out

But he hadn’t said much

and my sister drove him home

and we never begged again

These days we ask him

only childhood stories

like hunting with his father

He describes how the gunshot claims

the morning silence

and empty cartridges

speckle the ground