

MOTHER LOAD

She reads the telegram
bearing the weight of its words
in two hands

A single sheet of paper
heavier than Atlas could support

She need read no further than
“It is with the deepest regret . . .”

In fact
she knew
 upon seeing the emboldened eagle
 top of letterhead embossed
that John
 her only son
 was gone

“It is with the deepest regret . . .”

She read out loud
making the words come true
making them her own
not merely some dictated statement of fact

Making them somehow heavier
riding on air

Her hands fell to her sides
her sides were somehow seated in the old porch swing
its rusty chains echoing the weeping of her heart

“It is with the deepest regret . . .”
 deepest regret
 deepest regret
 the swing repeated over and over
 until darkness robbed the words from the page by her side
 the words she never spoke again