

# Little Father

By Li-Young Lee

I buried my father  
in the sky.  
Since then, the birds  
clean and comb him every morning  
and pull the blanket up to his chin  
every night.

I buried my father underground.  
Since then, my ladders  
only climb down,  
and all the earth has become a house  
whose rooms are the hours, whose doors  
stand open at evening, receiving  
guest after guest.  
Sometimes I see past them  
to the tables spread for a wedding feast.

I buried my father in my heart.  
Now he grows in me, my strange son,  
my little root who won't drink milk,  
little pale foot sunk in unheard-of night,  
little clock spring newly wet  
in the fire, little grape, parent to the future  
wine, a son the fruit of his own son,  
little father I ransom with my life.

Li-Young Lee, "Little Father" from *Book of My Nights*. Copyright © 2001 by Li-Young Lee. Reprinted with the permission of BOA Editions, Ltd., [www.boaeditions.org](http://www.boaeditions.org).

Source: *Book of My Nights* (BOA Editions Ltd., 2003)