

## MY FATHER WAS A DETECTIVE

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*Jeanne Wagner*

Detection is the heart of science, he always said.  
Listen to the way the wind maligns the trees.  
Study the sheeted landscape of the morning bed.

Look for pressure-points in touch: the wary tread  
Of footsteps, a whorl of fingertip. Try to tweeze  
Clues from the dead; it's a science, he always said.

Don't listen to the words but to the pause instead.  
Suspect the compliant one who too readily agrees  
To smooth the sheets and cover up the morning bed.

Have an eye for absence, erasure, whatever has fled.  
If a hand caresses, check for stains on the sleeve.  
Detection is the heart of science, he always said.

Ransack the house, dig up the yard and dredge  
The lake, empty the teacup and read its leaves—  
Then the sheets, the covers of the morning bed.

To find the spider, first make a map of its web;  
The span of the weft, the warp in what it frees.  
Detection is the heart of science, he always said.  
Study the sheeted landscape of the morning bed.