

NO END

I remember your picture in the gold frame on the hall table.
A black and white photo. Olden days. Pin-sharp.
You're smiling, smart in uniform and cap.
"Don't touch," mother said.
"Their only son. Cousin Larry. Lost."
Lost?

Each visit sneaked another passing peek.
I saw a badge like a bird,
a crown,
then saw it wasn't a bird
but wings spread between ferns.
Wings?

When I understood lost,
learned about laurels and wings,
I imagined you swishing through clouds
blazing courage and resistance
before a fiercely brave hero's end.
End?

I know, now, of testing, courageous times.
17 missions, all told.
Last was lifting a limping plane off a bombed out ship
and a clip of a wing tip was all it took
to slip from ship to sea.
Slip?

No slip.
A row of magnificent medals
tells you're part of the story
that imbues us with glory of all
who gave all.
Not lost, but found.
No end.

Dorothy Collard
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