MY FATHER TRANSFORMED BY DYING

DICK WESTHEIMER

I sat with him alone in the hospice room.

The breathing machine noises made a nap-drowse
muddle of me and I nearly lost sight of his star receding
from here to some galaxy far from where he was,
a place utterly unlike the stern man I knew,
who was so cool to the touch. He would often
cite Kant—that it was better to think than feel,
until he suffered a private revival on learning
of his cancer, a death sentence in three quick acts.
He asked me to call him “Pop” rather than “Father,”
his feelings, new, under siege—he, now, less a man
and more a near naked patient with no room to move
but away, as he became less “star” and more a small
part of an unknown galaxy, warm in the night sky.

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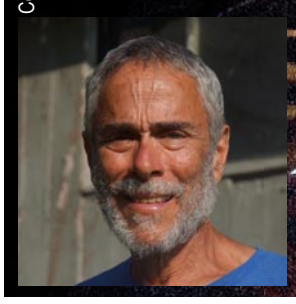

Dick Westheimer has - in the company of his wife and writing companion Debbie - lived, gardened and raised five children on their plot of land in rural southwest Ohio. Dick enjoys picking bluegrass music with his neighbors and running and walking the trails on his and nearby farms. His most recent poems have appeared or are upcoming in Rattle, Paterson Literary Review, Gyroscope Review Pine Mountain Sand and Gravel, Chautauqua Review, Rise Up Review, Sheila Na-Gig, Cutthroat, Minyan, and the anthology, I Thought I heard a Cardinal Sing, among others. Much of his work can be found at dickwestheimer.com