Mahogany

Mornings the tiny town’s sky belongs to me and the dog. The dog, mine, and we belong to the pavement, the roiled clouds to the man still sleeping one block back in what was once my grandmother’s bed, the mahogany one she bought from Carmella half a century ago, who got it from a good dealer in the Bronx who happened to be an uncle. The dog was the man in the bed’s; now he is mine and his and we are his. Hunters slept in that bed in deer season and I with one of them, almost, but I was done with married men by then. The hunter’s son married my second cousin last year, I heard. But out here with the soybean I don’t hear much. The radio gets BBC, NPR; the phone rings with other news: Andrew’s enlarged liver, Diane’s murder, Raymond’s stroke. The man in the mahogany bed never met them or my grandmother. And they never heard his broken night breath the whistling lungs; they never saw me put an ear to his sleeping mouth and pray.