

# Sharp Season

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Nancy Lee

*John B (Not His Real Name), October 18, 1953 – June 29, 2017*

He escaped  
his clan and insisted  
on a new name.  
He left family behind  
along with three fingers  
in a murderous machine  
up North.

He demanded  
freedom of thought,  
revered Rothko, Kahlo, Etta,  
and Dreamer of the Vine.

He tended  
his artistic talent  
and birthed  
multiple galleries.  
His rough magic  
curated the work  
of ample artists  
through thickets  
of gallery walls  
and career pitfalls.

He slipped,  
though, and fell  
down  
into his mind.  
Shattered himself  
in prisms of selves  
he knew  
but did not know.

He excommunicated  
his seven-fingered music

*Sharp Season*

put down piano  
abandoned guitar  
shredded canvas  
and muffled  
his multiple voices  
in bottom-shelf beer  
and a sea of inertia.

He caged  
himself  
in a prison  
of broken teeth  
and television.  
Past cryptic lips  
and asthma-pocked  
lungs his  
harsh words  
repelled friends.

He escaped  
his earth  
on the last Thursday  
in June.

Took a power saw  
to his ready neck.

Lettered his sorry  
and let himself  
leak  
on the leaves in his yard.

After a sharp season  
all is quiet now.