

## FRANK

“I have nothing to say to him,”  
Frank says of his younger brother  
Who, nevertheless, continues to call  
And ask how are you and how’s the weather  
Down your way?  
Of his sister-in-law,  
“I don’t want to talk to her.  
She talks too much,  
Goes on and on about nothing.”

Frank sits in his brown Lazy-Boy,  
white undershirt stained with breakfast coffee  
drunk from his favorite fifty year old cracked cup,  
gray sweat pants smelling faintly of urine,  
a thin line of dried blood on his chin  
like an exclamation point  
from where his wife of 63 years  
shaved too close.  
He sits and watches TV,  
Animal Planet and CNN his faithful companions.

Raised in bare feet except for school  
on a farm with seven other kids  
by mom after dad ran off with another woman,  
joined the infantry in WWII,  
got shot in the Pacific,  
went to university on the GI Bill,  
married his high school sweetheart,  
took a job, bought some land, built a house,  
,built a root cellar, smoke house, tool shed, deer blinds, pond,  
planted apple trees, a grape arbor, corn to feed the deer.  
fathered a son who refused to enlist  
preferring not to kill for college.

“He’s not interested in much anymore.”  
His wife wipes the crumbs  
Of apple pie off dry lips.  
Hands that once carved delicate feathers on  
Duck decoys sit limp in his lap, holding one another  
like two frightened children trying  
to keep fear in check.  
Legs used to scaling verdant mountains,

Schussing over moguls,  
Hang weak over the wheelchair,  
Confused about their new role.

The old man can't even be persuaded  
to ride in the golf cart around the back 80  
where he used to hunt and fish,  
any effort too much.  
He's let go of ambition,  
striving to bring order to life.  
Now, it's a waiting game.  
All he wants is to sit in the Lazy-Boy  
and watch TV.  
After all, he's earned it.

Carol LoCastro, July, 2008