

How To Swallow an Elephant

by Frank X Walker

Place an old photo of your father
face up in a saucer of milk.

Make a list
of all the mistakes you own.

Tattoo it in red ink
across both wrists.

Count the times you screamed
yourself awake behind the wheel

or left an emergency room
with only stitches.

Your father's absence
fuels your passion to be present.

Put it at the beginning of a list
of gifts from him.

Take your own children home
to the projects.

Let them play in the dirt
where your anger was born.

Make the longer journey
to his perfect front lawn.

Introduce him as their grandfather.
Stay long enough for one of you to touch.