

# Portrait of My Father

Category: Poems

written by Martin Kohn | June 18, 2021



...the son of a ragman

Half-tilt at a stack of 78's looking for a gem  
For Nina, for Dinah, for Phineas Newborn  
For Monk

A coffee-induced "visit to the bathroom"  
At 10am sharp  
Or the day was lost

At 70 waking up knowing each day  
Would come at the cost  
Of walking into the wind  
Tethered to a green tank  
With wheels that almost eased  
His wheezy way

Looking for Steinbeck, for Percy, for Maugham  
First editions  
This last born first American son of a ragman  
With frayed trouser cuffs  
With an "I stop at Garage Sales" bumper sticker  
With another protecting "Smokers' Rights!"

3 packs a day for 50 years  
Then cold turkey

Though he never could stop  
Poking with his finger  
Bent like a broken lance  
Looking for the missing cigarette  
In the now empty pocket  
Of his coffee-stained shirt