Silent Night

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Abstract

My father sits at the kitchen table, and armed with a pencil thoughtfully attacks the newspaper crossword puzzle. Methodically, he silences the questions with the desperate and lonely determination of a man who tightly grips tradition because he cannot cope with any more change...
My father
sits at the kitchen table, and armed with a pencil
thoughtfully attacks the newspaper crossword puzzle.
Methodically, he silences the questions
with the desperate and lonely determination
of a man who tightly grips tradition
because he cannot cope
with any more change.
Occasionally, he glances across at the stranger
who is his daughter
and his eyes are the cynical questions
he cannot ask.

I am his daughter,
and I see that he is disturbed, but I am helpless.
I cannot answer his hardened eyes
because my answers would be the ones he dreads.
And I cannot lie because my father hates liars.

So we sit in silence,
the table's dark bulk a barrier between us;
My father, deliberately recording the right answers,
and I, deliberately ignoring the wrong questions.