Walter Cronkite was My Father:
A Post Modern Memoir
by Tori Kensington

Walter isn't my father's real name.
Walter was there though,
speaking to me in round pearl shaped tones:
forgiving,
loving,
taking an interest:
telling me
what was what
and how it was
each day,
each night.

My other father,
that is,
the husband of my mother;
who worked so bloody hard,
putting food in our mouths,
whether we liked it or not,
spoke
at the dinner-table tribunal;
to the stranger who was his wife.
And he,
   The Chemical Engineer,
   Wizard of Wonder drugs
And she,
   The Pharmacist with the mission
   of Better life through Christ
(or Valium),
they talked of chemistry,
of drugs;
a medical life
medicated
with the
dreams
of Col. Eli Lilly,
talking
not to me.
I, being
too much in marvel
to meddle with
such brilliant banter,
would search for someone
to tell me
about life......
My other father,
nodding
from martini mirth,
sought sleep from the boar
on the Gordon's label,
and coloured his life
with the rich hues of
gin.
And so my father came home from the plant,
ate dinner,
and went to sleep.

Oh father,
not even a good night kiss
to smell your
warm male smell
and feel bristle
on my cheek
without the boar's bristle on
on your breath.
This, at least, was the family dinner.
And we would watch the CBS Evening News,
at least

I would watch amidst the cacophony of hyperprofessionalism.
I would watch teevee news
since no one would talk to me.

And there was Walter.
O Father of Illuminated Phospheresence,
O Holy High-voltage Induced Hero,
you spoke to me;
you looked me in the eye
and told me of the world;
you observed all and criticized none.
My other father would not
share his knowledge with me.
You never failed
to appear
with the rest
of the family,
and your
talking
head
became the head of the family.
My eye met yours;
I knew you wanted
me to hear you.
I heard your words directly,
not serendipodously,
not fearfully that
I might not
understand,
or invade
into the world
that would ever be closed

...
to me......
No engineer I
(that was lamentable),
no mathematician,
no chemist,
no use—
fulness.......  
the Cathode Ray tube of our 24-inch Zenith,
became my retina,
connected with
antenna leads
to my great aluminium
    synaptic array
on the roof
of our homeless house
waiting,
and swaying
in the evening breeze,
reaching,
for your signal,
to enter
and stimulate my latent self.
Your voice,
your deep eyes,
so wise
in seeing
the greatest history of our century,
gives you more credibility than any real
    life father;
making him
less real;
making you
my real father.
At first I cried
when you left the teevee.
Then I admonished
my selfishness.
You worked hard
at being a
father for me:
always being there
when I needed you;
always talking to me,
while I was being radiated
by my nuclear family.

I will always remember your voice
that spoke to me
of astronauts,
far away wars,
of presidents, kings,
and killed Kennedys,
with your perfectly sounded syllables.
You gave me
your words:
pearls
falling
over the airways;
and made language mine.
And now your
pearl-tone gifts
enrich me,
and I clothe and wrap them around me.
And I too,
can shine
in my inheritance,
and love you.
Walter,
father,
Walter,
on thee, 'ere;
eye follow.