

Darrell Petska

Armaments

Pop's 12-gauge double-barrel shotgun—
locked and loaded at his bedside for the Atomic
"duck and cover" '50s, the Cuban Missile Crisis,
the '60s race riots, the wars at home and abroad—

witnessed the conception of five kids,
the hubbub of baptisms, communions, confirmations,
graduations and defections from the family circle,

cobwebs confounding the dual triggers,
dust marring the barrels' nickel finish
and stratifying in its long, potent chambers.

From the doorway thirteen grandkids
eyed its solitary vigil but dared not enter
its sanctum smelling of age and decline
and ticking like a time bomb.

It sold for 50 bucks at the estate sale,
50 more than it was worth,
never firing a shot at that sniper
coolly picking us off, one by one.

Darrell Petska's poetry has appeared in *Verse-Virtual*, *Autumn Sky Poetry Daily*, *Chiron Review*, *Star 82 Review*, *Tule Review*, *Muddy River Poetry Review* and widely elsewhere (see conservancies.wordpress.com). Darrell has tallied a third of a century as university editor, 40 years as a father (six years as a grandfather), and almost a half century as a husband. He lives outside Madison, Wisconsin.