

*Martha Collins*

## **A Little Life**

lived in the country  
of coffin continent earth

a little life a little  
life he flicked

on his lighter looked  
at his toes there's

life in the old my mother  
said the movie began

in a tunnel my mother's  
grandfather said in a war

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would throw the dead in wagons  
like wood and maybe

looked at his toes a leg  
would twitch the stack

would shift and maybe  
fingered the boards the cracks

between in graves so shallow  
swarms of flies and maybe

the ground itself would shift  
make sure I'm dead he said

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tight little house he flicked  
on his lighter pine

cabin at summer camp the lights  
were out a girl in a coffin

dug up the corner where wood  
was missing she'd fingered

clawed she'd eaten the dirt  
the first story I couldn't

let go she was trying to make  
a tunnel to make her way out

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stuck in the country  
of mother the tunnel

I almost died they  
said a little life

in the movie a man put the man  
in the coffin men in the war

put men please make sure  
my mother says burn

me up but there's life  
in the old a little yet