

A.M.

My father's shaving with the radio on.  
He's in the bathroom, the Trutone's in the kitchen.  
All of us crammed in this crackerbox  
on Spicer Street, Wichita Falls.

The one tiny speaker strains and crackles.  
The air fattens on Patsy Cline.  
Ernest Tubb comes on and it starts to wobble.  
Daddy's dark face, mirrored back a foot away,

half-shrouded in a cloud of Barbasol,  
cuts through a cirrus of steam.  
In T-shirt and boxers he's like a linebacker  
in a phone booth. But his voice

when he arcs out a Bob Wills holler  
starts near the ceiling and doesn't level off  
till it hits Oklahoma.  
In six months he'll be dead,

his oilfield Cessna accordioned into the flats  
near Olney. But right now he's happy,  
almost completely himself, a half-assed  
country singer, playing to a packed house.

*i.m. Richard Gaylon Norwood*