

Half a Heritage

by [Mary M. Brown](#)

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And then there's Dad, sent off
at twelve to boarding school
where he learned the rudiments
of Lutheran theology and how

to do his own laundry and how
to smoke a pack a day, a thing
so well learned that it became
a 57 year old habit. Do the math

and you'll know how short he
lived, how long he blew smoke
rings for me and my siblings
as he wrote his sermons, graded

papers, sipped a martini, watched
Gunsmoke and my brother's baseball
games and my mother as she lifted
loaves from the oven, all with

the pleasure of a twelve year old,
the devotion of a monk whose
charge it is to focus on the cup,
the host, open mouths all around.