

Flexing Muscles

Geoff Goodfellow

Dad's elbows were resting
on the kitchen table

The Advertiser stretched out
in front of him & he was mumbling
about the threat of a nuclear war

it was October of 1962

& Khrushchev & Castro were
flexing their muscles at JFK

i was flexing my own

standing in front of dad's shaving
mirror wearing my new black shirt
the sleeves rolled up tight
against my now bulging biceps

there won't be a war i said
you carry on about that
all the time

his blue eyes came up over his horn rim
glasses & he stared me down

don't be so bloody sure about
that & what are you doing flexing
your muscles

i might get a tattoo i told him

*don't be so bloody stupid
you won't be getting any tattoos
i'll give you the drum on that right now*

*why not i said with all the
arrogance i could muster*

*you're just a kid now but you'll
grow up & you might find yr'self
in all sorts of trouble
you don't know what the future
holds*

whadda ya mean i asked

*you might rob a bank
you might kill someone . . .
you don't know what's around the
corner
so you don't set yourself up
to give the coppers an even break
get that through your head
now he said*

& went back to reading his paper.