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Counting

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Counting

Raymond Ziemer

They trundle Mom out
In the big wheel chair.
She slumps
One hand cradled useless
In her lap like a small dead pet,
The other hand
Curled in a loose fist
Finger indicating –
What?
We do not know.
She counts
In her hollow intonation:
“Two, three, four...”
Her pale blue eyes regard us
Without emotion.
Parched lips crack
To count:
“Three, four, five...”
And we wonder
What?
Stirred from her waking dream,
She croaks
“Four, five, six...”
Counting.
Until the day
Just once
She rouses from her reverie
With a gasp and
“Oh,” she cries
In the gleeful voice of a child,
“Look at all the puppies!”