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Dad

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DAD

Kathleen Keenan

And the thinness of the end
 thickened in my throat,
 your veins
 weakening in their role,
 your blood
 a slow ride, now
 leaving your heart
 in search of your soul.
 And all around the room,
 flowers, lotions, your watch
 naked in its wristless tick,
 no longer a watch,
 but a clock for you to small-see
 time. I wanted your passing
 marked
 like we marked birthdays, house-movings,
 inches on the wall to
 prove we grew. . .the quietude, the regularity
 evidenced itself in the
 unemployed air, lungs light yet leaden near
 the pleats your arms made,
 pin-pricked
 on those seamless sheets.
 I wanted you to
 sit on my new couch, blow smoke rings over the Daily News,
 teach me how to soft boil eggs,
 not because I liked them, but so
 I could watch
 you.
 I wanted to tell you I stole quarters from your dresser,
 read your Christmas shopping list so I
 knew I was getting ice skates,
 feigned surprise at the what-could-it-be box
 on my side of the tree,
 tell you that once, I saw your private parts,
 and that they frightened me.
 To have it end so silently, quietly,
 made it seem like it never really happened. . .
 eighteen years later,
 I'm still not sure it did.