
Begging to fan
Up
And out
Like a
Cat
That wants claw its way
Out.
Escape.

Tap. Tap. Tap.
Six crackers won't foot the bill for a day's work.
Tap. Tap. Tap.

My eyelids fall from gravity
And I'm back on the tiled floor,
Comforted by the smell of cleaning products
And fresh toilet water.
Elbows on the toilet seat,
Ass on the floor,
Head hanging above water.
And I can see the shit stains and limescale on the inside of
the bowl and
This of all things makes it
Stop.

Stop.
10:53am.
There's no time for such luxurious moments today.

I slide the packages between my fingers a few more times
And shove them into my pockets.
They will remind me later
That I am
Not
A
Superhero.

HOSPICE

KELSEY CONNORS

It's madness: frail wrists, whispers of a blizzard tonight,
a water glass with a clear straw. A snowman outside is sinking

into itself, air writhing in lungs weighed down, heavy
with mucus. This is what you breathe with

for your life that always, your life that never
collapsed. Don't go. Don't—go.

A cardinal flashes its red across the window.
Danielle climbs through snow to be

with you—just this one time. On the stiff couch
sits a furrowed brow. Her book of poetry is a sad song.

With so much to cry for, it is future
we settle on. The hours crack open like white eggshells. Your
dad

quietly cries in the hallway, thumbs on his temples,
looks at something none of us see. Outside the glass

doors at the hall's end, is a pure white
world. The earth beyond

these walls clambers with ribs
tired from laughing and crinkle-eye smiles—not
here. We wait over your starched linens and think dying
is all we know of heaven*. Your breath clings thin
to strands of air, we watch for your chest to fall
and rise, hang on each whisper of air.

We were together,
and that was good.

*from Emily Dickinson's "my life closed twice..."