

## diagnosis

that first night  
we sleep side by side  
on a soft grey couch  
television on  
background noise  
to distract us  
sweating, i wake  
midway through a  
dark night  
to static and panic  
press bare knees  
to chest then  
tiptoe to the kitchen  
grab a bottle  
uncork and sniff  
search for a glass  
and pour,  
hands shaking  
dry floral hues tickle  
my throat as i lean  
on the cluttered counter  
and try to ignore  
he suffers  
in the next room  
aimless, i saunter  
barefoot on linoleum  
reading recipe cards  
yank open  
a drawer and stack  
pens in piles,  
alphabetize  
the spice rack,  
anise, basil, cloves  
scrub a burnt pot  
until my fingers are raw  
take another gulp  
the rooms are  
hazy and quiet  
but for a fizzle of  
late talking static

## **parking**

### *june*

we always take the furthest spot, eager to walk  
the flat safe expanse of sloan kettering's parking lot  
on occasion he smiles in these first days  
swollen with hope  
late june sunshine on his shoulders,  
the dogwood just in bloom  
browning white petals on the pavement

### *august*

hot, he waves a limp wrist  
motioning me to park nearer to the entrance  
the tree laden with green leaves is still  
people walk and wipe sweat from their eyes  
his clammy hand clenches the bag he still carries  
relentless jersey humidity stifles his irriguous lungs

### *november*

it spread  
hip, kidney, bone  
the cane hobbles him from the car to the front door  
where the lobby is filled with mums and pumpkins  
the wool cap fits loosely now, his face still beautiful  
chiseled, sunken,  
emaciation chills his infected frame as his sweater  
slips off his back  
like a skinny boy wearing daddy's clothes

### *february*

precarious conditions bloom  
the wheels on his chair are thin, the snow  
is deep his canvas is frail-stained  
with painful strokes  
we are met by staff who navigate him  
out of our subaru impreza  
and take him away

## blue

eventually, i clean  
pick up after him  
once more  
dead levi's scattered  
in lumps along the  
earth of his closet like  
forgotten drugstore receipts  
i count six and  
whip each pair  
through the air of our  
icy bedroom  
microscopic specks of  
dust and sweat dive from  
the denim, bits of him  
land in my hair and face  
i rub my eyes and fold  
inky strokes of mascara rain  
down my left cheek  
puddle on a cluster of freckles

i dote on each  
bend, pleat, line  
the waistband to the cuff  
run fingers over dark  
spots in the pigment  
smoothing blue cloth into tidy  
squares like postage stamps  
I place the pile of  
worn frayed jeans  
at the edge  
of our marital bed,  
where we  
rarely talked  
or fucked  
and swallow  
hard

**fuck**

well,  
that seems  
to be over

naked skin under  
crumpled sheets

the familiarity of your  
leg against mine

my flesh resting  
beneath your frame

flaming sticks of  
patchouli incense

the damp towels  
pulled from piles

the wipe and toss  
the tiptoe to the toilet

the hurry back to  
find you gone

## Half Moon Love

Sleep soft on half a moon with me, my love,  
Cradle me tight deep within your crescent;  
Where even stars stare, jealous from above.  
Fuck me in blackness until we are spent  
High above the heat of an angry sun;  
Where reality's light cannot find us,  
We will feast in peace on our fine fortune.  
I touch your eyes and lick your lids in lust.  
But the moon must grow, plump into a sphere  
Our fingers claw the surface as we slip;  
A Chagall, weightless, over fog and tears;  
My head on your heart, my curls on your lip.  
    We kiss hard as we fall fast into earth,  
    And smile as our eyes twinkle with mirth.

