

WORDPLAY

The curls of her hair straightened
as my fingers brushed through;
Lily and rosemary snuck through the crevices of her hair
Perforating the air in an ineffable beauty,
Much like how the dent in her lower lip
captured my breaths.
As she turned to look at me
Her ubiquity rapidly absorbed my senses
My eyes lingered on that beauty spot
dominating her upper lip.
She smiled; the effervescence skiped my words
And her fingers playfully tilted the curves
of her hair behind her ear.
At a loss, I mumbled, "beautiful,"
and therein I remained.

ADNAN FAKIR

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LAST WORDS

ADEEB CHOWDHURY

She knew she was dying.
(Last words of Elvis Presley: "I hope I haven't bored you.")
The faces crowded around her bed, albeit distorted by her poor vision, remained recognizable. Her two daughters, one son. Five grandchildren. Those little buggers.
(Last words of Sir Walter Raleigh: "I have a long journey to take, and must bid the company farewell.")
The electrocardiogram machine at her bedside beeped out her faltering sequence of heartbeats. She drew in a sharp intake of breath; her chest responded with a stab of pain.
(Last words of Salvador Dali: "I do not believe in my death.")
One of her grandchildren, apparently a girl — she could vaguely make out her drooping ponytail — interlocked her small, stubby fingers with hers, sobbing.
She desperately wanted to tell her it was going to be okay; grandmother would be perfectly fine; but, alas, that would be a lie.
(Last words of Steve Jobs: "Oh, wow. Oh, wow. Oh, wow.")
The ECG continued beeping out her weakening, faltering heartbeat.

Beep...beep...beep...
(Last words of Princess Diana: "My God, what happened?")
Another figure—her son—gently brushed away thin locks of gray hair from her eyes and stroked her cheeks. More sobbing.
(Last words of John Lennon: "I'm shot.")
She attempted to open her parched mouth. She needed to say something, something her family could hang on to, something they could remember her by. Something. Something.
(Last words of Benjamin Franklin: "A dying man can do nothing easy.")
Beep...beep...beep...
(Last words of Nostradamus: "Tomorrow, at sunrise, I shall no longer be here.")
A word was at the tip of her tongue. But, when you're ninety-eight and dying, the process of producing that one word was beyond exhausting.
(Last words of Thomas Edison: "It's very beautiful over there.")
She took a deep breath, and —
The ECG machine stopped beeping and instead produced an infinite, flat line on the heart monitor.

HOPE'S A DEAD BIRD

SABRINA SAMREEN

Hope dared to fly; it had grown new wings,
Fresh air, blue water beneath,
Hope sings.
An air of pride, Hope was soaring high,
In the light blue, cloudless unimpeded sky.
Towering majestic, everything was miniscule,
Hope encircled about.
A dash of courage, it dared to venture out,
On to unknown terrain.
Gleefully free, Hope was losing his mind!
Refused to be caged in, Hope loved to fly.
But hope had been

careless, foolish,
Spotted by the Hunter, so hushed and so pry,
It aimed at Hope, who flew, unaware and oblivious,
Hunter prided himself on his rifle's power,
Seven sixty-eight miles per hour!
Gunpowder, effortless shot,
Hit on the chest, Hope was caught, In mid-air!
Then came the fall,
Freefall acceleration,
Hunter basked in glory, wild with expectation.
Hope refused to give up,
The last flutter of wings,
Wriggling frantically,
Last prayer, mournful song he sings.
Thrust into the Hunter's sack,
Hope was over,
Hunter had the last laugh.

