

POETRY

Absolute power of attorney



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I am aged.
 I am worn and broken and pained.
 I suffer
 But ...
 I do not die.
 I am not forgotten.
 I will not be let go.

My loved ones are all here at my side.
 (Perhaps not on it.)
 Their hazy faces turned toward me.
 Loving words and kind touches.
 Memories crowd the air
 Past blanketing the present.

They are the fighters of death.
 Teeth bared.
 Jaws clenched in determination.
 Screaming their war cries
 As though they might bring me back from this
 As though they might save me with love alone.

I am fed without tasting.
 I drink without raising a cup to my mouth.
 I am a tangle of tubing and whirring machines.

I am frozen.
 But in some twisted cruelty I am not numb.
 I am adrift.

Unable to steer myself in this current.
 The water is too deep to hold my ground.

I am long ago surrendered.
 Each cell in my body signals defeat.
 What is to come is written on every organ,
 On every lab value,
 On every scan.
 What no test can tell them is that I am exhausted.
 Exhausted.

When I am touched
 Tears run down my face.
 Each new procedure and intervention
 No mercy. No more.

That is how I learned
 That there are things
 Worse than death

And yet ... they fight on.

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