

Burning Out

The Doctor said,
fifteen years, at best.
But you stuck around
four more.
Running on fumes
I guess
and that stubbornness
that I also share.
Every few months,
some new crisis—
the same monster
lashing out—
thrashing, tightening,
tendrils of violence.
Which is how I learned
that there are demons

worse than death,
and there were times
I found myself
praying
that you'd just die,
not because I didn't love you,
but because
I did.
Pill bottles crowded us,
on countertops and
end tables.
Tables for an end.
To this day, It kills me

to see them
out. So I hide them
like the virus.
My little sister
—just a babe,
she mistook you
for a Grandpa.
Even now, it haunts me
to see my husband
lounging, sleeping inside,

while the sun is shining.
A man you never met,
but you walked me down the aisle,
your likeness
in a little portrait, tied
'round my bouquet
You didn't deserve this

liver failing, a body flailing,
the fluids pooling,
your skin yellowing.

And still,
my personal Sun,
refusing to burn out.

But as Bob said,
That long black cloud
is comin' down. And

He not busy being born is busy dying.