

POETRY/FICTION

THE OLD MAN

The distended veins of an old man's hands
tell of a chemical death that flowed and
molested the tumor that drained his
strength and confined him to the
decrepit bed with the mattress that
bows under his back causing a
curvature that resembles an inverse rainbow
during a light rain in early spring.

His face is a flush that reminds one
of the crimson hearts in a deck of cards while
his stomach protrudes as a balloon stuck
under a child's shirt while playing in a
sandbox as the wind blows exposing the
creases on the back of his neck from the
sun that has delivered this malignant tenant
within his swollen belly.

The old man wears yellow as his fluids
leak before he can arrange a rendezvous
with the sallow cracked toilet that sits
inches yet miles from his urgency that smells
a pungent stained odor when the nurse
arrives to view the gorge that was fashioned
by the silver scalpel in an hour of invasion
attempting to salvage life.

The vicar enters to tell him he is ordained
to the healing of the transition of his existence
but when the covers are lifted from his skeletal
cadaver the famine of breathing announces what
the doctor envisioned when he noted that
ordination does not always come from
human touch but from God's touch as the
message is delivered: death.

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