


Breaking the News

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BREAKING THE NEWS

Clipped hellos and thin smiles this Friday afternoon.
For the first time I see streaks of silver
in your coal-black hair—the metallurgy of age.
Your brown eyes fix mine.
Outside, someone is sweeping the sidewalk.

I explain the diagnosis.
Your pupils dilate just a little, then you look down.
Your thumb and index finger,
flecked with drywall dust and yellow paint,
pinch the bridge of your nose.

We should move on to treatment options,
but first
we pause for our last avoidance
and look out the window,

distracted for a pre-darkness moment
by a blackbird calling from a leafless tree,
a cloud streaked with salmon and gold,
the thin, crescent moon.

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