

HERCULES, WHEN DYING

Hercules, when dying, is an ordinary man. His chest rises, falls. He struggles to keep his breath in his body. He needs help out of the tub. His hair still needs to be cut, his nails clipped. He lies on the couch in his bathrobe, his slippers on the area rug, and his dick shows; he does not know his robe is open and does not care. Every season is Spring, when old, forgotten things seem new again.

Hercules, when dying, is not a legend. He dies like everyone else, his body raging into new limitations. One can tell this by the way he bends to lift the shed door up and out of the way. He curses the squirrels that nest there, tells them he created the night, chased the dinosaurs into extinction, how he was proud of the shed, designed and built it himself.

Hercules, when dying, feels the chill of the wood floor, takes honey in his tea, asks for the labels with washing instructions to be removed from the collars of his shirts, is prone to outbursts and dementia, can no longer do his own taxes.

Hercules, when dying, cannot imagine the world without him. The flowers in the flowerbed seem to ask, *where has your strength gone?* as he walks from the patio to the tool shed, empties the gas lawnmower of gas, puts the tools away, transitions the house from a/c to heat.

Hercules, when dying, wonders how a bumble bee can remain aloft with such small wings.