

Ketchikan

It wasn't just that she was dying,
but how loudly her death came into the diner,
she and her husband lit up with whiskey,
their car parked outside by the pier.
They were stopped on the way to Ketchikan,
the woman's cancer too ruthless to treat.
The treatment itself a kind of fading.
At least they'll bury me with all my hair,
she said, and her husband put his hand
on some small part of her body
that wasn't meant to be intimate,
but the way he touched her made it seem so.
They left with takeout bags,
ate outside on the hood of their Toyota,
and when I locked up for the night,
they slept off the drink in the backseat
beneath a white hotel sheet,
a brochure splayed on the dashboard,
gleaming with photographs of glaciers, a black bear
tearing apart a fish. The fish pink on the inside,
her roe spilled like a bead bracelet
come apart.