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Brother's Dying

Mary Dengler

Dordt College, mary.dengler@dordt.edu

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Brother’s Dying

Mary Dengler

His death wasn’t the worst;
It was his dying—
That long journey between diagnosis
And the body’s caving
And the mind’s
In months of radiation,
Immolation from the outside in,
And chemo, from the inside out—
Shriveling wit and sinew
Until little but a shell was left.

It was my death and death
Of every person staring back
Till I lament,
Till little but a shell is left.

In its rampage, when would he decide
To halt the torture and declare
“Enough—I’ll go.”
But when he turned to me, I could argue
Equally both sides,
Hold that voice and look,
Familiar as my own,
And trust that God,
Who loves us more than we…ourselves,
Would put on human flesh again and see it all
In human terms and give us what we want.

But God will not be reasoned with—
His agenda outsmarts ours
And makes us suffer more or less than we deserve,
We think.
So we lost James:
A polished mystery,
Lover of order and clean surfaces,
Green plants, deep-ocean dives,
Now under mounds of dirt,
And finally,
God,
Resurfacing in one more epic tale.