

## Reprise

His hip replaced. Four valves bypassed. Now this. The tremors shake his spoon as he lifts it to mouth, lets the potatoes slip down his throat. Tabling the spoon, he reaches for the towel bibbed around shoulders and chest, and sweeps his lips. Blinking, he looks to my wife, to me, says, *The roof's got a leak.* His shoulders fall against the high-backed chair as he fingers the plastic tray holding his meal, looks down: *Just one more thing to add to the list.* I trace the years on his face: *Well, Someone must think your shoulders are pretty broad.* He laughs. Or sighs. *I'm sure we can get it fixed,* my wife says, wrapping herself around his shiver. *You've got plenty of able bodies around.* He rises, then sinks in his chair, and traces the bowl of lukewarm stew: *Maybe we'll just have to wait.* She looks to me, then says, *No.* *We'll come fix it before winter hits.* He swallows her words slowly and, looks up: *It won't be a bad winter though.* He steadies his fainting hand and reaches for his pills.

—Tyler Chadwick