

Before She Died

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Two hours before she died,
I lay on the facility's bed with my mother,
Only, she was not my mother,
And tried to hold what there was to hold:
A blanketed, curved waif in a room's echo
Eyes forever shut,
Unhinged mouth laboring for breath.

I could only watch the small, browned tooth
Jutted above the cavity of expiring sighs,
Like some small nub weathered
In a cascade of time
And I had to stare out the window

At something like bees hovering, or hummingbirds darting among new flowers;
The sun and the wind in the green trees, in their own motions
And tried to recall something like a moment
When that tooth was white.