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Jean

Dennis Ross

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Jean

by Dennis Ross

Paranoid schizophrenia the doctor said.
Fine, but Jean always strives to help me
some way when I get her groceries and meds,
bakes me cookies with the ingredients
on hand: flour, sugar, eggs, and prunes.
She likes delicate subdued flowers
like spring beauty, hepatica, and buttercups
nothing too exciting, red roses or amaryllis.
Jean glues magazine pictures into journals
with poetry she has found, Frost and Oliver,
writes her own haiku, reads Hemingway
especially the short stories about fishing.
She worries about a young boy not there,
but also sees love and compassion in every face
she meets, understands people better than I.

She wants release from her prison
from the gruff voices other people do not hear
from her emphysema and collapsed lung
wants to fly away and now lies dying.

Jean will leave a hole in my life, a vacant lot
in a row of houses where one burned down
leaving only grass and wild flowers.