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I Remember Rodney

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I Remember Rodney

by David Vancil

You admitted you'd abused your body
in youth, destroying kidneys and liver,
and said you wanted to pass your final
days with your mother and close kin.
The last time I saw you, I noticed you
across the commons, eating lunch alone.
In that space, where students congregated
with friends, we nodded at one another,
exchanging half smiles. We lifted our wrists
and made a sign, not knowing then we were
gesturing the last time. The next time I
went into the campus bookstore, I missed
you among the faculty books, where you
once led me to a bookshelf to reveal
my own slender volume proudly displayed
while you grinned proudly as a brother would.