

THE MASSACHUSETTS REVIEW



FICTION
ESSAYS
POETRY

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Sometimes fall arrives & you turn 34 & are diagnosed with a fifty-year-old man's disease which you shrug off with a Martini & quip from your fiancé "honey, you've always been a bit quick" which is Ha Ha funny but smarts the way the receiving end of wit always smarts so you go Buddhist again but neglect to give up all desire & settle for the bit about embracing suffering which the sudden absence of friends suggests isn't working out so well. Sometimes in your fears of being hurt—the truck with the pipe protruding off the back stopping short & the pipe through your windshield—you become Woody Allenish & your father says Woody is okay funny on screen but a pain in the ass to be around so you get back to the business of creating hope & eat plenty of fiber & drink lots of water & after years of waiting for no real reason you landscape the backyard for the wedding & make new friends who come over to discuss sustainable softscape, your new love for the coneflower, AKA Echinacea, the way its thistly orb center projects skyward & its petals fall away, a purple badminton bird, determined & lovely. Sometimes June Gloom stretches into August & you get married in July & people take the lychees out of their Martinis & put them in their eye sockets & dance the rumba & you scoot off to Italy where you go to more churches in a week than your agnostic blood has been in a lifetime & marvel over shaved pecorino on sliced pear drizzled with an S of sunflower honey

& return home with a micro perforation
in your colon & spend a week in the hospital
& surgery becomes imminent but there's
an eighty something percent chance you'll
survive so together you throw a party entitled
The Last Supper & project film noir onto
the back of your house so that your last
memory is of food & friends
stilled on blankets, wrapped in the muslin of dusk. Sometime
you wake at 5:22 in the morning
& it's winter again & you sit on the edge
of the bed & trace a new scar from your sternum
to your pubis & your new wife sits up
& asks with the emergency room
still in her voice, "Baby?"