Comfort Measures Only

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i.
On this bed for hours you lie, while the crowds pass you by. Some offer water, others pull the covers back over your yellow socks. Reminds you of your wife, who is dead. You buried her twenty years ago. And grief does not become anything else. Nor do you expect it to. At night you talk with her, while folding her warm laundered clothes. Smooth her pillow, which was scrunched up the way she likes.

ii.
Someone shakes your arm and you wake up. You look over and it is a young boy. He must have mistaken you for his father. You feel a violent wonder to teach him all he must know. Wrap your hand around his thin shoulder. It is probably the same with him. But he goes soon, and you wave goodbye. The moment is brief, and the longing only intensifies. A memory to bring home and share over the dinner table.

iii.
As the morphine sets in you look around. The crowd has dwindled to a few. The boy is nowhere to be found. You try to speak, but noise is futile here. And the faces look deep in thought. You think about what flowers to surprise her with. Someone left a white orchid next to your coffee, maybe that will come with you. It is drooping slightly. As the light dims you think about things still to do: buy paint for her canvases, vacuum dog fur out of the carpets, buy a nice vase for flowers, the list goes on and on. You will finish it later.

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