Nepenthe

Scott C. Biggerstaff, DO

The two of them were unhoused until unwell.
They shared a room partitioned by a curtain, always drawn back despite the 50 years between them.

I saw the younger pushing the elder through the halls, left hand on wheelchair handle, right wing wounded—her forearm resting there instead.
They were the only women I knew to compliment the food and sometimes I wonder if the elder traveled back in time to be tender with herself, show herself love the world withheld.

In the only ending I can stomach they found an apartment together near a park, the younger piloting her friend among islands of shade and birdsong reminding her to take her meds.

And the elder generous with “I love you’s” she can’t afford.