

Father's Day Snapshot

Years after it happened, a first aid class: this paramedic teaches me how to give a sucking chest wound a chance. Nothing but tape, saran wrap, sealed on three sides. And I imagine the blue-tint stuff against his skin. Now it is too clinical for snackfoods, for leftovers.

The maternity ward: checking my email at work, in the subject line these words *He probably won't make it through the night*. And I shouldn't have thought of my aunt's stewed tomatoes breaking apart under heat. I am surrounded by women in labour, that nasty, happy pain and I'm thinking of tomatoes. And then I wonder if souls are recycled, sterilized like glass bottles, filled with whatever excess vegetables are priming to spoil.

Each passing November: my grief on a shelf in a cellar. When I reach for a jar, I mourn the loss of this chutney and that photograph of his daughter, the one he never lived to see born, her face grumpy because she is spoiled too. Her finger points towards his headstone, in the foreground there are three slices of pie. If souls are recycled, hers lives in his margins.

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