

# THE DOOR

Behind the door is a woman  
who wanted to dance  
at more weddings,  
travel to sacred places,  
make love to her husband again.  
She wanted either the privilege  
of growing old, or the grace  
of a swift demise in her sleep.

But cancer comes as it pleases,  
stealthy, secretive.  
As the purple, night sky yields  
to the cusp of morning,  
she thinks about dying.  
Is it like suffocating?  
Or flying?  
Or walking on water?  
A thunderclap of exquisite pain?  
Or buzzing numbness  
ushering you away?

Prayer warriors rehearse their  
“Hallelujahs” and “Amens,”  
but this is no survivor’s story.  
No sanitized, bleached white sickness,  
no pastel ribbons to pin,  
no charity walks,  
no miracles,  
no mercy.

Behind the door  
her personal apocalypse unravels  
in fear and waiting.  
She tries the mantra  
“I have had a great life,  
I have had a great life,”  
as if it were sufficient remedy  
for the grievous burden of death.

*Cinnamon D. Bradley, MD*