

4 Chapters

by Tantra Bensko

My old father's older world is going invisibly into 4 cabinets somewhere in the air, which he rearranges, as I sit by his hospice bed, his beautiful long fingers, with feminine nails, constantly moving in the air, his wrinkled arms raised, elbows jaggedly out, bulging, red skin sagging. He asks me to organize whatever it is into those non-drawers for him. When he reaches his hands up, I hold his blankets down on his metal bed, as I lean my pendulous breasts over the rails. He says, *no, the drawer is right there! Quit pretending you see somewhere else and just put them in it!* His mouth stays open wide, snoring awake between words. *4 chapters, he says. Go in 4 drawers in the cabinets. We took care of 1 and 2, now it's time for 3 and 4. But they're out of order. He says they always get things mixed up. Whenever them come, they. . .* I ask who mixes them up and he says *God*. I know what he means.

But I don't see the cabinets, or know how to put chapters into nothing, floating, above the bed he's lain in for a year, me sitting next to him, becoming spinster. My only lover went away, left me sitting here by Papa's bed. He said sags must run in the family. I still write to him nothings in my mind every day. I don't see the airy chapters above the bed that Papa is yelling at me about, *now, stop pretending you can't see them!* I can make them up:

1. We die.
2. We become like snow.
 1. We drift.
 2. We become the thing you forget, turning crystalline, sparkling, clean, and fresh, and melt away.

1. we drift 2 like snow 1 and die 4 and you forget 1 you ever
loved us 3 you thought we were beautiful 4 we want to die 2
we dressed like snowflakes for christmas in the white
coveralls and gloves and diatomatious earth and borax for
months because of scabies, and didn't touch each other
except with burned tweezers 3 you melted into the ground 4
we felt like dying 2 we used to be one flowing water 3 ice
crystals 4 I am dead to you. I am dead to me. 1 I am you,
snow drifted I am no longer we 3 but you don't care.

