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Cancer

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C. G. HANZLÍČEK

CANCER

So many drugs at this stage
That the room pulses
Along with me.

The old women are praying
Beside my bed, ticking away
Like harmless bombs.

For a second the ceiling
Snaps open
And I am torn

Upward to a paradise
That rocks
Like a heavy boat.

My body turns
Soft as a woman's
Thigh and will not move.

Walking toward me a child—
Torn coat and a yellow
Star on his breast—sings:

The bird has lost his feathers,
The bird has lost his feathers,
He's naked as a thumb.

The boy puts a finger to his lips.
No, he whispers, no, not now.
He is right: my words

Would have made neither a friend,
Nor an enemy,
Nor sense.