

*Wife Lore (with Dialog Actor in Parentheticals)*

Sometimes, I wish I could cajole the ellipsis of a stranger into carrying the silence that arrives. I could slide inside the noiselessness and walk backwards toward my life. The cardiologist (Did she tell you?) has advised that my lower chamber is a Byzantine relic of hereditary succession. (It shows her battered history of a life.) I spaced out when she spoke, imagining a tiny piano trio orchestrating my heart at some lovely café. (She can't listen to all this bad news. She tells the trio to play *Rainbow Connection*. She tells the trio to play Elton John's, *Curtains*.) What I want is the absence of chambered mutiny. To break up with my disease. The only problems I have are my problems. My vices are plain and very nice: they are [REDACTED] and [REDACTED]. Maybe cheeses and baguettes. (Her inner demon is American.) My life has become perfect in its useless beauty like the zodiac of freckles on my arm. I decline being carried in an ambulance from hospital to a hard travesty. I'll set fire to my hair before death can do it. (She'll burn her heart black and then send herself back to the kitchen.) I'll look myself in the eyes and I'll tell the Chef of Tomorrows: *I'm not rare*.