

WEIGHTLESS

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Honorable Mention, Poetry*

My niece, seventeen-year-old Sarah, has a brain cancer called an *astrocytoma*. *Astro* means star. This star shoots its spiny tips across Sarah's unsuspecting brain. The body of this pointy gargoyle lurks behind her thalamus, away from the surgeon's knives. Some points have slithered to the left side, while others have navigated her spine. We visit Sarah's. She walks with anti-gravity boots; her steps are slow and big. I hover as does everyone, except her sister, Regina. Regina evaluates Sarah while they talk about their manicures. Regina says Come on, Sarah, let's go lie down. Regina takes her hand, leading her like a breeze steers a petal. I tiptoe to the bedroom to say goodbye to these girls who are already worn from the first round. Sarah rests. Regina is coiled in the crook of her sister's legs.

The next day, my husband, my son and I go to the beach. The light is low and warm in October. My men with the same names stretch their wetsuits over their long bodies. They take up the surfboards to confront the floppy waves. They are like puppies, rolling in the whoosh-whoosh of water, diving at the little walls of surf, showing off their muscles. I am cross-legged on my towel, watching my guys. I am glad the water buoys them. I'm glad it buoys me.