The Process of Melting

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Eyes on the ceiling,
I rewatch the day—
my boy’s face
sharp and cold,
like an ice sculpture,
skillfully laid out
for final display.

I try to relax—
the months of watching my child
shrivel as the tumor grew,
finally over.
   But sleep won’t come
as I remember the days before
the cancer—
   The December when the sleet
coated the streets
and he wanted take his first driving lesson;
   Days of fishing on the frozen lake,
woolen green scarves across our faces;
   The graduation reception
when he stood shy
in front of the camera,
my wife saying, “smile,”
punch bowl full of ice tinkling in the background.

I think perhaps a scotch
on the rocks
will help me sleep.
I drink it in the kitchen,
the street light
casting a yellow square
through the window and onto the table
across my hands.
Finally, glass empty of scotch, I return to bed—
Leaving the ice to melt slowly
In the silence behind me.

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