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My Fourteenth October

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My Fourteenth October // Casey Schmidt

The back pain started in August and September called it cancer. By October, my grandfather had chicken legs and his beer gut hung low off his sunken chest. The cancer was everywhere, in his lungs, in his brain, pushing behind his eye until it popped out farther than the other. I tried to pretend he was looking at me sideways, but the cancer-eye followed me more closely. I decided to shut mine when he talked to me. It ate holes in his head until the last day, when he went crazy and tried to jump out the window. He swung fists and screamed himself hoarse, throwing every curse he knew at my dad and uncles as they pushed him back into the bed he would die in later that night. By then, my mom was already driving us away from the hospital. My sister slept. I watched the leaves whisk by in the wake of the car and felt my world a little less full without him.