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I drove my stutter

Hunter Moyler

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I drove my stutter // Hunter Moyler

to the vet
on a tepid day in spring.
The bluebells had begun
to flounder & burst
below the sun &
the birds began to sing
more subdued songs
to which the bugs would surely
overrun our houses.
My stutter was as well-behaved
and calm as she could be, but
she'd shrunk gnarled & sickly
amid age & lethargy. "A stay in the
hyperbaric oxygen chamber'd save her,"
the doctor said, "but it'd prolong her suffering."
I wouldn't deny life was better
with my stutter sleepy & snug at home.
My syllables came strong & steadily
in an earthy, meaty baritone.
Now I could order takeout on the phone
and say my surname, stoppage-free.
I could ask people on dates whenever I wished.
(Limited success, naturally.)
But she'd stalked me since I was four
and had been my constant companion,
ready & willing to make me strive
against my self-pity.
And I looked at her lying there,
distorted & pale, where
the foam of her gasping lay white on the mat
as thick and as heavy
as the air in our flat, where we'd spent
our years as best friends.
And I realized it'd not only be selfish, but self-cruelty,
to hang onto a pet
indefinitely.