

## JON WESICK

### WHAT WE TALK ABOUT

Mom lies in a hospital bed.  
One corner of her mouth sags  
in a perpetual frown. Illness  
whitened hair, darkened rings under eyes,  
and left grape-colored bruises on thin-  
skinned arms. Turkey and stuffing  
dropped from fingers litter her bib  
and blanket.  
I read her a Raymond Carver story  
projecting my voice so she can hear.  
The dialog circles and dodges  
as the two couples drink cheap gin,  
evade, and reveal themselves.  
Mom doesn't seem to like the ending.  
Mouth open she falls asleep so I whisper  
thanks to the now dead author  
for this alternative to awkward silence  
now that mom's vocabulary has shrunk  
to "yes," "no," "okay," and "ow!"  
I realize now that pushing back darkness  
and loneliness is a story's purpose  
and promise to write you a pair of gentle arms  
to nestle your head to a soft shoulder  
and a lover who will shelter  
your hummingbird dreams

**Jon Wesick** is host San Diego's Gelato Poetry Series and an editor of the *San Diego Poetry Annual*. He has published over two hundred fifty poems in journals such as *Muddy River Poetry Review*, *Colere*, *Pearl*, *Pudding*, and *Slipstream*. He has also published fifty short stories. Wesick has a Ph.D. in physics and is a longtime student of Buddhism and the martial arts. One of his poems won second place in the 2007 African American Writers and Artists contest. Another poem had a link on the Car Talk website.