

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.