

## Waiting

White blurs dart around her father  
with needles and tubes.  
The blue cardiograph line stumbles  
and falls. (deep breaths, keep  
the air flowing in and out, keep  
calm) He arches his back,  
opens his eyes  
to the white-nothing ceiling.  
She stands tearless  
gripping the glass partition.

The smell of roses, dirt, then  
casseroles and chocolate almond cake.  
Spoons clink and slide on china cup  
saucers.

She waits in his chair  
in front of the TV  
during late winter afternoons.  
Still in office clothes,  
with VCR remote control, she rewinds  
replays the same memory tapes.  
(awkward Christmas smiles  
all of them laughing, ripping open  
presents) Hoping something will  
jam or break or wear out,  
a box of tissues  
still unopened in her lap.

— Deana Marrs