

Oklahoma r e v i e w

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A few days after your fiftieth birthday

your body, with a new manicure
and a new kidney a new haircut
and a new pancreas
had stopped breathing in the night
your heart had stopped beating
arrested in mid thought
and you went without air or blood
for eight minutes

what happens in eight minutes?
the segment of a sit-com between commercial breaks
two hundred cars pass my house
an army of red ants carry off my sandwich
and the human brain suffers irreparable damage
without blood or air
even the basic parts of your brain
that tell you to eat and sleep and breathe
no longer function on their own

when they brought you back from death
we could only watch
your nervous system jerk your face
back and forth
like a dead baby being rocked to sleep
your mouth hung open with the umbilical cord
connecting you to your new mother
for hours we watched your lifeless body alive with the spasms
until the doctors gave you a sedative
and us a choice