

My Mother's Watch

Each time I pick it up, her thin, gold watch,
I wonder if that second-hand still sweeps
around the tiny face past painted numbers
she no longer sees but wears as if she could.

For a second she sweeps away the hands
that try to lift her body from the bed
and soiled gown she doesn't want to see
but wears to keep her hip incision clean.

She tries to lift her body from the bed, while
tethered to a tube fed up her nose and down
her throat. It keeps her stomach clean since
nothing will stay put but her bad luck.

Tethered to a tube, fed up with hunger,
with an *ileus*, meaning any drink or solid
won't stay put. It comes back up. Bad luck
unless it leaves, her gut restarts. But say

the *ileus* lingers, solid, no drinks—then what?
Eight days, the clock hands scythe away our hope.
The doctors leave and won't restart her care.
While I sit, bedside in a chair, her breathing stops.

Day eight: a life now scythed away, a hush,
no blinks or beeps, just denial's disbelief.
I pick it up, her thin, gold-plated watch, how
strange to see her second hand still sweeps.