Adultery In the Albatross Diner

Ben Gunsburg
ADULTERY IN THE ALBATROSS DINER

The man sitting beside me is shrinking into his clothes.
His jacket is bright blue and swallows him like a balloon.
His head is the size of an apple, now a plum, now the pit of a grape.

He is screaming but his voice is just a whistle, inchoate and fading beneath the sounds of The Albatross Diner: pots and pans, waitresses with their giant steps.

What is it you say, little man?
Your body is a naked pea
and soon you’ll ride the backs of protists.

He is just a speck now, a point on a line, imaginary to everyone except mathematicians and schizophrenics.

Before I go, I do something very cruel; I brush crumbs from the counter and finish his soup. The crumbs took like asteroids, I’m sure, and the soup is something he can no longer fathom.

When his wife returns I take his clothes and pay his bill.
I take her too,
with my large hands,
and knowing she will weep,
tell her everything.
It is the same story I tell her for years
after he is gone.