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Letter to My Father

Ronald Wallace

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Letter to my Father

The children now call you Grandpa-Who-Died.
I remember them
skipping in and out of your illness
through all of their small lives,

as you slumped in your paralyzed chair,
a thin strand of spittle splitting your lips,
your discolored tooth and difficult grin,
the squint of your pale, blind eye.

I wondered what they must think of you,
clipped to your catheter sack and urine,
your hands clumped limp on your laprobe,
your legs cut off at the thigh.

Now they tell me they remember
Grandpa-Who-Died:
how he walked and ran and played with them,
hand in hand, side by side.

— *Ronald Wallace*