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Adultery In the Albatross Diner

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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.