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The Last Kaddish

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BRENDA SEROTTE

HE LAST *KADDISH*

This death thing is hard on the heart
which beats, but late sounds different.
Everything else goes on as planned,
the morning paper is aimed at the door
detailing stock market picks,
crucial decisions are made to eat in
or dine out on the usual:
Tofu or Thai chicken salad. Then,
student essays graded with uncommon
patience and occasional relief
for the couple of offbeat creative visions.

One afternoon you feel better
buoyant as days from another era,
ready to get hair and nails done.
Reclining in the shampooist's chair,
relaxed as a ribbon,
you burst into tears, embarrassed.
It's been months since you lost your grip

just trying to be who you were
while the world and its oceans shifted
imperceptibly.

Didn't anyone notice but me?

NOTE

Kaddish is the Hebrew prayer for the dead, recited for the last time after one year of mourning.