

Do Not Resuscitate
Blake Bennett
Best of ≈ Poetry

On the day after Christmas,
gifts sit around a plastic tree
in a quiet house, save for a draft
of winter, cold as the hospital
room we're waiting in. Phenol
sears my nostrils, and I wonder
if you can smell it with the CPAP
on your face. The mask has kissed
your face raw and bruised the bridge
of your nose funneling air
to your caved chest, lungs
drowning and scarred.
When the nurse removes the mask
I can see your bloodless lips.
She turns your monitor and mutes it
so we won't hear the static squeal
of an unbeating heart.
Your lids flutter once, and I wonder
if you're dreaming of green seas
and a shimmering mermaid tail
to replace your palsied legs.
You're sinking down, and your mouth
makes little o's like pearls
sought by invisible skin divers
who snatch your precious breath.

For Brooke, 1996 - 2016