Palliative and Supportive Care

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After the ambulance

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Poetry

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The winter that her mandrake died, Mrs. Brizuela was admitted with a heart that would not fasten.

By 1 a.m. that first night, the telemetry wires had started to bloom across her chest,
Looming spires of foxglove climbing the bed railings in bruised bells,

She told me that no one had watered her brugmansias since the ambulance came for her,
That by now their leaves would no longer flare open at night,
Remaining folded inward, reserved,
That by now, the rest of her collection would have started to learn the shape of her absence,

I asked which one she missed the most,
She whispered, "the moonflowers"
She told me that they spend all day closed, opening only in the dark
Then, nearly smiling, said "by morning, you would never know they had opened at all"

By four, her voice thinned between breaths
The foxglove bent lower over the rails
She asked me to open the curtains,

At dawn, the monitor went quiet
Outside, morning pressed against the frosted glass,
In her empty apartment, seeds slept between damp paper towels,
And somewhere, unnoticed, the moonflowers were starting to hide from the light

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