Lunch for One

Summer Woods
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He sits in a corner booth
all by himself. Everyone
else is looking for fast,
but he eats slowly. His shaking
fingers struggle, each bite a
crawl to cross the finish line
of his mouth. Wrinkles
threaten to slide off his face
as he stoops forward from the
weight of all the years. His
drooping eyes stare straight
past the kids wearing ketchup
and the mothers chasing them
around the yellow-arched maze
to something far away –

A long blonde ponytail
reflecting rays of sunlight,
a sweaty hand nervously thumbing
a ring in a pocket, a flower
garden behind a white house,
a strip of skin beneath a perfect
collarbone, a little baby red-faced
and crying, two rocking chairs
moving in quiet rhythm, and
holding a frail hand in a sterile
hospital bed.

His skinny ankles, peeking out
from gray trousers, tremble
as he stands to leave.