

# The Dining Room

Poetry — Alysha Matthews

shuffle into the kitchen  
And lay the food on the table.  
He sits by the window  
The TV is on, but it's too early for wrestling  
Oh  
He's watching that church in Texas.  
Or maybe he's looking out the window at his garden.  
The garden has not been the same  
It's been hard  
since he got sick  
"Thanks Doll"  
I don't need to fuss at him about his sugar  
or his medication  
or the oxygen pumping in through a tube from the other room.  
e's already pricking his finger  
lancing at the medicine chart Shirnett made him  
And the oxygen tube is draped over his head and plugged into his nose.  
So I sit  
I look at him  
I tell him about covid  
about old friends and coworkers  
about our grandkids  
and how the basement flooded and  
so many of his things  
are gone.  
He nods along while he chews his yam and chouchou  
He smiles  
it trembles as if he's holding in a laugh  
But the chair is empty now.  
The Tv is off and  
I sit alone.  
It's been a long time.