

**The Oncologist**  
Brendan E. Ryan

My dad sits in the other room  
Watching the end of the giants match,  
While I habitually make a cup of tea.  
There's nothing better—in life—  
Than listening to the kettle scream  
And hearing about New York's loss!

Outside, the towering trees loss  
Of rusted leaves allow room  
For bright moonlight to scream  
Thro' the windowsill. A match  
Sits on the counter, waiting to bring life  
To the wax on the table, while I sip my tea.

I go over with my tea  
And light the candle, but the loss  
Of flame ceases my effort to give it life.  
My eye, disrupted by the oncologist in the other room,  
Looks to him discoursing to a newlywed's match,  
And suddenly—on the other end—I hear quiet screams.

Between those intermittent screams,  
My father mutters—I'm sorry. My tea,  
Cold and bitter now, matches  
The feeling of loss  
A young wife bears when this place has no room  
For a husband's life.

It is a cruel taker in life  
Causing me to scream  
And cry out. I search for room  
In my heart—to understand why tea  
Always goes cold. Why a loss  
Is always incurred in a match.

Why even a good match  
Doesn't always bring a candle to life.  
I'm told—*Everyone deals with the tragedy of loss.*  
Why seasons end. Why moonlight screams  
Horror and tragedy. I sip my tea,  
Naively, looking for answers in that room.

After a sigh, I realize there is no room in life  
To make sense of a match and her scream,  
To make sense of loss and of cold tea.