

Imago by Rhian Parker

A soft child
will let the fly die.

Determine they are done with their unoaked drink;
watch
the wings turn red
and when it is good and dead — scoop it out
right on
to the floor.

It will be okay
when a parent
decides that it's time to go inside.

Disoriented by the window still ajar,
the sconce in the foyer, the screened-in door.

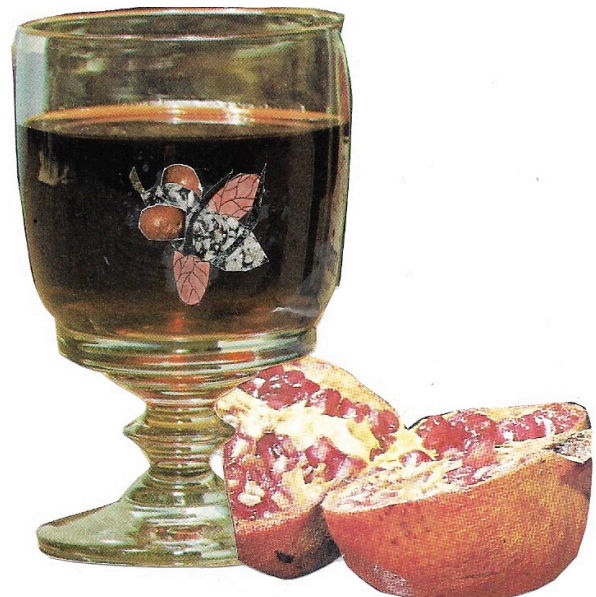
Decides no paper towel parading
as a wafer-thin lifesaver. No chemo.

It will be okay
if they wish to die
as a fly
in your glass of wine;

to smell the essence of life
well-lived on your breath;
to get one last glimpse at their

longest,
sweetest
investment.

To a
certain extent, I too
understand what it's like to be that
tired of trying to keep myself alive.



A bold child will spoil the meal.
Decide that the insect must live, even for
a few more
wine-soaked moments.
Spoon it

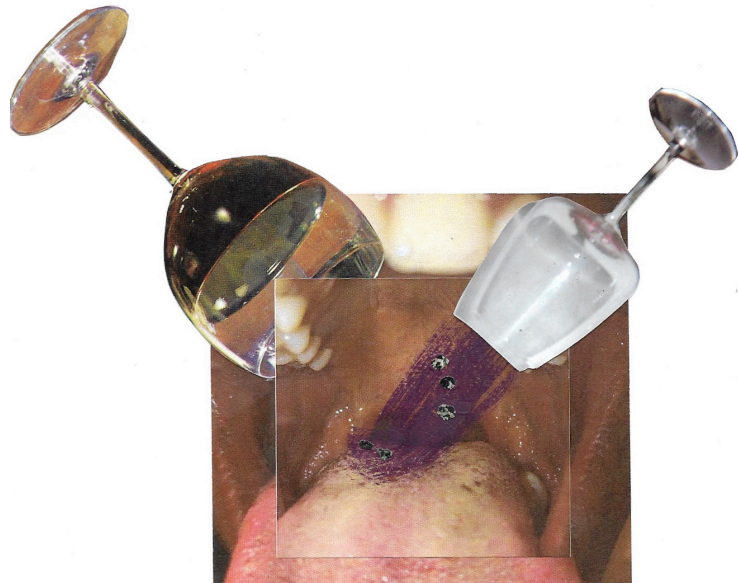


out of its liquid death
onto a nearby napkin.
The fly will cough.
The child will savor
the drink.

It will be okay when a parent
decides that EMDR is just
not for them, no gene therapy,
no waitlist
for surgery.

To a certain extent —

I will always
swallow the fly
along with the wine.



The last thing on my breath
will be the death
of grapes.