

Art

Eric Nelson

October, a woman and a boy, a tumor
overtaking his brain, draw pictures
in the waiting room.

She makes a red apple as round
as a face. Then from her hand a cloud
grows and darkens over the apple

until the crayon breaks inside
its wrapper and hangs like a snapped
neck from her bloodless fingertips.

He's drawn two stick-figures
up to their necks in falling gold
leaves, their heads all smiles.

It's you and daddy, he tells her.
Above them a flock of m's
fly toward a grinning sun.

When she doesn't answer
he says on Halloween he'd like
to be a horse with orange wings.

Staring at his picture, she says
It looks like Thanksgiving.
Where are you?

He taps the sun. I'm shining on you.
She hugs him as if trying
to press him back inside her.

I'm not crying, she whispers.
He looks over her shoulder.
I'm not crying, too.