

Ripe Banana

In the waiting room
Mostly water-drinking men
Waiting for our names through ceiling speakers
Slightly louder than HCTV host's scripted laughter
Models selling remodels
Creating drama and decorating solutions

Most of the irradiated are well past indignity
As we slide down our metal-less shorts
For the techs positioning us
A folded loincloth over cancered crotches

Older damaged men are used to this:
Each morning a new physical mystery
Gradual decay, sudden disruption
We're supposed to smile at mortality
Invite it in for a conversation with acceptance

We look at each other for signs
(*during commercials*)
Some limp in slightly bent
Wearing mocs or untied shoes
Pot guts loose crooked pants
Barcode lanyard on a wrist
Fresh gauze-covered needle bores
Which way PSA?
Chemo-shunt lumps under the shirts of a few
Depleted
Hairless
Vacant

We wait, counting ounces
Brief golf-baseball-never-illness conversation
The ruined TV house's sledged walls
No match for the monotonous anticipation of
Name/birthdate submit

