

## Dinner among Friends

I notice the wallpaper.

Dad and I have eaten together  
more than once here  
in the dining room  
at the Friends Nursing Home.  
But this time we sit at a corner table  
and the outlet plates catch my eye—  
below the chair-rail where  
the wall is stripes: coral,  
with muted, mottled grays  
and pastels. At each receptacle  
the covers blend,  
seamlessly.

Above, in identical hues,  
a different pattern swirls,  
with arced and flowered tentacles.  
I look across the room, by the door,  
to the light switch and find myself  
surprised again as two more plates  
all but disappear—each  
stem, leaf, or blossom lined up  
with the surrounding pattern.

When I mention this Dad says: "Rare  
to find such craftsmanship these days"—  
as he stares through the sightless centers  
of 90-year-old eyes.

I agree, and spend a few moments  
contemplating his new home,  
in a place where even the paperhanger  
takes the time to care.

Steve Bloom  
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