

**“BETTER TAKE WHATEVER YOU
WANT NOW, HONEY ●**

Sharon Kennedy-Nolle

’cause it’s goin’ in the garbage,”
so the aide said when I told her you were gone,
but I couldn’t lift a thing,
except my eyes when I got outside,
Bronx, midnight, parking lot,
looking up to your bright lit window, awful fluorescence
where the sanitary nurses scurry, readying the room fast
pitching all the party favors of your hospice stay, silly tinsel hats,
pulling down the papier-mâché streamers, the stuffed
bears that celebrated the extra days you made;
wheeling out the IV pole; stripping
the bed, that crocheted comforter from home.
Three months is a long time to drip-die.
After they had you bagged,
taped and zipped, out you went
(frail bone sack, well under a hundred pounds)
the steel back door of the loading dock,
forked over to the bored, gloved guy
(where else could he be on a Friday night?)
who grabs the clipboard, signs, throws
open the hatch; his minivan engine running
exhausting the July air.