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Short Position / DNR

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Short Position

the dot-com bubble, 1999

Vertical is splitting twenty to one
Monday and mother is dying,

metastatic renal cell carcinoma
multiplying like a penny stock

in a perfectly manipulated
pump and dump campaign,

a new Harley for me, a hearse for her,
Vertical is splitting twenty to one

Monday and mother is dying, now
I have a deadline, get back

to the book of poems about her family
she knows I've been working on

between bread winning, day-trading,
baseball, swimming, and soccer,

build in six months, a year maybe
to read, show to friends,

Vertical is splitting twenty to one
Monday and mother is dying

though no one knows, she does not
want to be treated differently she tells us

makes us promise to keep it to ourselves,
she does not look like she is dying

going about her business with a smile,
dignified, driving herself to the oncologist

each day for another shot of poison,
kidding with the young nurses,

Vertical is splitting twenty to one
Monday and mother is dying

she asks me to help organize
the cupboards, empty the closets,

I am taking short and long positions,
recoup my initial investment

then hold the rest for the next Microsoft,
there will be 50 to 100 million

new internet users in China by 2002...
content seeping through portals,

spreading to the Pacific rim,
hers through lymph, from *the right*

retroperitoneum popping out
lateral to the inner vena cava

measuring 2 centimeters, the last
pages of the book await revisions,

she said she waited seventy-two years
to live, because some things just take time,

Vertical is splitting twenty to one
Monday and mother is dying,

and there is plenty of time to suffer,
Interleukin, 5-FU, Alpha-Interferon,

speculation. Are the kids old enough
they won't forget her? I know Marina is,

but what about Dominic and Leonardo?
How do I build their wealth of memory?

What dividends and interest
will she yield?

Compounding and steady growth,
higher than expected returns,

a cup running over, those shares
in their eyes a hedge for my broken heart,

Vertical is splitting twenty to one
Monday and mother is dying.

DNR

He dreams of a thrush on a sill,
the detail of its feathers his insulated sleep

layered between quick small heart
and shimmering sun,

tapping at its reflection
a dull staccato on the surface of sleep.

Up through the ripples
he sees the high hazy sun,

swims toward the light
to find himself young, his tie loosened

his coat in his arms
having overstayed his time at a party

dozing in an easy chair
with an unfinished drink, dreaming

of the evening's twisting conversation
no one agreeing on anything except,

we cannot remember our birth,
or the moment we fall asleep,

how it must be the same when —

You'll be late for school!
His mother's liquid voice under water,

the thrush flies from the sill,
his first wife shaking him gently

taking his arm to help him
up from the chair, whispers,

come on honey, it's time to go.

About the Poet

R.A. Pavoldi is a self-trained writer, crediting the Napolitano-American dialect and the school of hard knocks for his voice. He's published in *The Hudson Review*, *North American Review*, *Italian Americana*, *FIELD*, *The American Journal of Poetry*, *Crab Orchard Review*, *Tar River Poetry*, *Atlanta Review*, and others. Email: rapavoldi@yahoo.com