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## CINDY CHILDRESS

### What Remains for Suzie

Suzie writes to me about sexual exploits  
when she's between chemo treatments.  
The friend she always flirted with  
took leave from his job and moved across the  
country  
to change her bed pan and give sponge baths  
after the partial;  
he found ways to please the two remaining  
inches  
inside her when the scars healed.  
Eddie's gone home now.

So, she tells me what color scarves should I  
send,  
what places she dreams of having again  
to be touched  
and by whom.  
The tumor isn't responding to radiation  
Eddie is married.

The doctor smiles sadly, she thinks  
because he likes her face  
masked in donated Lancôme products  
framed by a bright, red wig  
in defiance that those outside herself  
should read her inner cavities  
like a cheap novel  
as she awaits prescriptions at Walgreens.

When they met, Eddie said he didn't normally  
like feminist  
but she was not butch at all.  
She clings to breasts and the masquerade of  
hormones,  
feminine and undone.  
It is the female abjecting itself from itself, she  
writes  
amazed at her body's  
treachery, conspiracy with science  
against her nature's  
impulse to climax.

*Cindy Childress' poetry appears earlier in this volume.*