

Fear of Intimacy

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When my father tried to kill himself the first time,
he ripped a telephone wire from the wall of his hospital bedroom.

The next time it was a bed-sheet. A nurse stopped him.
In his pockets were pencil notes:

confessions for crimes he did not commit but felt
must have been the crimes of his punishment.

As the days continued the list grew like keloid scars from the DBS.
When I'd visit, he'd ask, *Was it in the papers?*

When I'd leave he'd say, *Don't come back.*

His mind: the same sentences like a vinyl's skip
the way they widened, trailed, & returned.

As he kissed my mother in the ward's cafeteria
he whispered, *I am Judas.*

When my father's mind became the small wheel in my chest
I didn't want to love anyone I didn't already love

& those I loved I hid from. I broke up with my girlfriend,
smoked outside Beth Israel & took the long way home.

At the end of each avenue,
everyone who was left I watched as if they were on the horizon

& could break at any moment. Then what?
I'd have to wade in, find the fragments

& clear my already empty studio,
wake to the shadow of something half finished & continue.

The currency of love is self-sacrifice.

