

After Diagnosis:
A Summer Paeon

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*Your remembrances are like unto ashes, your bodies
to bodies of clay. (Job 13:12)*

Turns out my ticker needs a pacemaker.
Clay? Ashes? Okay,
I get the point. I mean, I do.
Time to spend less of my day

tuned in to memory, more to right here
where I am—a long way from awful.
The sweats, the phantoms, those dumbass old tiffs
with my mother and more than a handful

of others, fears of nonexistent dangers . . .
I'll let all that go. I'll praise
this A-one morning in early summer
and the merlins who've built their nest

in a tall red oak just yards uphill!
One example of many. I say
and savor those hawks' folk names: *Blue Darters*.
I'll praise each day, or try,

all creatures bright and beautiful,
our sprawling family, our children,
grandchildren, clutch of beloved friends.
Lord, for them all let me keep vigil.

Okay, so flesh is clay. Okay.
But me as some Job? Oh, spare me!
Everything here, right here, right now—
there's my sanctuary.