Super Mario in a Retirement Home

The others talk, in the afternoons, of falling—through dreams and dosages, into the LA-Z-Boys of their spines, down hallways opening like one long throat.

My roommate lifts his leg and drops it, lifts and drops. The end’ll be like that, he says, without the bed to catch you.

I tell them falling brought me here. The scant platforms fell away, and I dropped into my world’s tessellation, small and far from god. I tell them I was a doctor once, and know the fire has left their fingertips. Look outside, I say, the toothless flowers waggle their arms for you. Their roots do not swallow them. Today, I push my nose deep behind their lips like a lion tamer.

Tomorrow, I place my ear to a drain pipe and commiserate with water. Like turtles, we can skulk the earth long after our shells have gone.

But when they die, the falling stops. I can only dive into the deepest pond wearing a belt of wrenches—where no clock or song can follow.

There, I’ll meet the algae, coalesce with rocks
in their incredible dimensions. I’ll rest, knowing I can finally sink no deeper.