Shoelaces

a woman sits, lonely in a crowded wardroom, a tv radiating silently in a corner

the tv wants to talk, but almost no one wants to hear it

women in multicoloured uniforms and glasses march to and fro straightening things

I miss beer, says a guy with a big belly, what else am I going to have to give up?

she pretends she doesn’t hear him, he turns up the volume and ignores her

he didn’t really want to talk, just wanted an audience

the general walks in wearing white, the room goes silent and everybody without good reason to be there leaves

there’s a war on, he says to her, poking her chest

a rebellion, we must crush it

the woman looks down at herself, she loves her symmetry

two cells are talking, one is being rude

I’m in charge here, it says, I don’t care what you think

at midnight, the other cell raises its head. I’m dying it says

what’s with the green things? why do the green things surround us?

the woman’s friends gather like birds at a feeder

haircuts are passed out,

I’ll take one, everyone take one. Who are we to say no?

I’m sitting in a radioactive saloon, feet up on the table

a woman walks in, catches me looking

“what happened to your hair?” I ask without opening my mouth

“a gesture of solidarity” she says “with a lonely friend”

“will she live?” I ask. “Yes, I think so” she replies, only the slightest quiver in her voice

I record her name and address, grist for the mill, and promise to forward the documentation when the forms are complete

I’m a collector, did I mention that? I like symmetry too

the woman in the wardroom engages her cells in conversation

“stupid cells. what will you do now?” cells don’t answer…they only talk to each other

the general returns, armed and dangerous

let the battle begin, he implies, and all hell drips loose

the fat man is silent, silenter than he’s ever been

a glow of a colour no human can describe issues from the door of the next room over

I’m out of battery power…this has to stop

I get organized, get out of there, a new haircut in the pocket of my backpack

I don’t really know what’s going on with all the birds, but I’ll try the haircut on later

Jews walk four steps with any funeral procession, why not walk four steps with the living?

I’m a Jew, I tie up my shoelaces, what else is there?