

BRANDON THURMAN

**Anointed**

My father tilts the vial of holy oil over his finger  
& smears it across the forehead of my best friend's mother.

I imagine the cells inside her breasts as dark archangels  
rioting in the streets of heaven. On Monday,

she cancels her chemo. Belief  
ripens in her chest. She dies.



I never did tell my friend about the time I walked in on my father  
refilling the vial with our Dollar General vegetable oil. I want to be

cynical, but the light glowed through the oil's gold  
as it glugged into the vial & over his hand.



Remember after the revival?  
We found your mom in the kitchen.

Your dad was kissing her,  
dancing her around the silence.

The thick yellow light oiled  
her tightly stitched skin.

When they caught us staring,  
they pulled apart into two

separate blushes, his hand  
falling back from her breast.