

## James Cihlar

## The Safest Place

With age comes loss of critical faculties.  
 We can no longer make sense.  
 Nailed to the cross trainer at the gym,  
 I see a commercial for gold. Six reasons  
 to buy gold. It is the safest place in the world  
 to keep your money.

Joe Biden says  
 Gitmo needs to close.  
 A judge rejects the lieutenant's guilty  
 plea because she, brain damaged, was following orders.

Yesterday my sister called. My mother is dying  
 of cancer. I have been rehearsing my blame  
 and forgiveness speech, *angry old drunk*. Who am I kidding?

In the sixties, I watched *Looney Tunes* reruns after school.  
 In one, Elmer Fudd hunts Bugs Bunny through time,  
 ending in 2005 as Elmer shoots him with a laser gun.  
 Long-bearded Bugs pops out of the grave, kisses Elmer, *what's up, Doc?*  
 What will I do when you die? I asked my parents back then.

I never thought  
 I would live in a country that tortures people.  
 Some folks say that the lowest unit  
 of sense

is the sentence.  
 Others say it is gold.  
 I say it is the word.  
 What's up, Doc?

The ending comes first,  
 then the beginning. Abu Ghraib. Save gold.

Cancer. Dying. Then beginning.  
 How you tortured us.  
 I forgive you. Please forgive me.

With the ending, thirst  
 comes to the living.  
 Then the beginning.  
 Gold. Save.