

Maximum Level

The radio announcer said,
"There's a maximum level
of radiation
a person should receive
from x-rays
each year."

Well, she's had it—
they've x-rayed her bones
so clean that they shine
like water-polished
pebbles.

She stood naked
in a white gown,
paper slippers
on her feet,
and stared
at linoleum,
so clean,
so white,
so waxed
"you could eat off it."

It reflected her face.

"We'll x-ray."

X-ray away, she thought—
you can't x-ray
my soul.

Wrong.

They put her on a table
and above her loomed
the machine's grey snout.
They x-rayed her
until her soul
disappeared.

"Problems?"

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"She is one,"
her husband replied.

She heard the man
on the radio today
talk about
maximum levels.

She'll tell you
that she's had the
maximum
level.

Her bones shine
like that linoleum floor.

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