Susan Deborah King divides her time between Minneapolis and Great Cranberry Island. In this week’s moving poem she remembers a hospital visit with an elderly Maine friend.

**Watermelon**  
*by Susan Deborah King*

There being not much of later  
to enjoy it in, he suggested to me,  
down-island neighbor, we cut it open  
right now, the “personal-sized” melon  
I brought, since he told me  
I might as well take back home  
the rhubarb pie I made for him in the hospital  
because he preferred his fruit plain.  
He could be plain in his speaking too!  
Was it just the emotion of the moment  
or was this the sweetest, juiciest, most rubiate  
fruit a tooth ever sank into, bright  
in the mouth as the July day outside  
his shut in, TV-in-the-background house,  
next to which sat his big red truck  
with his late wife’s name, same as his boat’s,  
emblazoned on the hood? Next to that  
rose a yellow, cross-hatched  
squared off mountain of idle,  
due to his illness, traps. He was a strapping,  
loose-jointed man, a hunter, a kidder, skipper  
of any room he sauntered through.  
When I got up to leave, he couldn’t rise,  
oxygen tubes pinched into his nostrils.  
He took my hand – a surprise – looked  
into my eyes and couldn’t find the bottom.

*In memory of Lyn Colby*