

Anaphylaxis

by Christian Bell

I told my wife, don't eat the crab, remember what happened July 4th, but she shrugged, couldn't resist. Then she complained of feeling hot, lightheaded. Then the hives came. Then she had trouble breathing. So I gave her Benadryl, rushed her to the hospital, told the scared kids, I'll call. I went through two red lights, wanted some credit, but she wasn't watching. Inside, the breathing's better but still labored. She's seen immediately. Doctor came by, asked, why's she eating crab if she's shellfish allergic? He had thick black glasses. His chiseled physique and perfect tan threw his career choice in your face. We didn't know, I said, omitting, do you think I'm stupid? He asked about vomiting, diarrhea, anxiety. He mentioned anaphylaxis. He asked about drug, bee, nut allergies. The nurse administered epinephrine. My wife had an electrocution moment. Then she's fine. The nurse hooked up an IV, said, you should be fine. Before calling home, I said, you look good now, but damn that was scary. Why am I having problems now at 39? I shook my head, looked at her. She was scared, like the first time she was pregnant. I refrained from saying, I said don't, and did you see me maneuver through traffic. I remembered our wedding reception. I tasted the crab cake, pulled her from greeting people, said, you have to try. And she did. Now, I said, forget crab, we'll try other things. I wrapped my arms around her. Then she cried.

