

Fat Man

I catch sight of the man
on route to the mountain's summit.
He carries with him a recycled Coke bottle
secured to a small pack.

But the man also hefts his weight
inside a sweat-stained XXXL red tee shirt.
He's what I call a fat man—

a fat man who doesn't exercise,
a fat man who engulfs food,
a fat man who lives only to become fatter and fatter.

He turns at my approach
then drops his eyes
as they meet the expression in mine.

I pass the fat man swiftly, with disgust,
wondering what could drive him
to attempt the summit.

When I glance back with this question in mind,
my eyes drop to the legend on the red tee shirt:
I'm hiking for the National Cancer Foundation.

I caught sight of the man
on route to the mountain's summit.
He carried with him a recycled Coke bottle
secured to a small pack.

He was heading upward.
He was on a mission.

—Niall Janney