

SICK

by Gil Somers

When was the last time you were truly sick?
When blood pooled in your ears, and, wrapped in cotton
curtains, you sunk, stoned and solemn, into restless dreams,
waking in wet pools of phlegmy sweat, what might be urine,
and definitely spit.

When you breathed through your mouth for so long you
forgot parched wasn't a state of rest, chapped not a state
of order.

When you lay in bed, eyes closed, tracing the pulse from
your toes to neck to forehead, feeling everything and nothing
all at once.

Hurting.

When you'd wake up again, remembering you were
frightened, that you were close to knowing what it meant,
but couldn't accept that some dreams have no meanings

When your hands were dry, and your throat was sore, but
your nose still found time to run away from you and slobber
itself on your favorite shirts.

When the last thing and first thing you ate was saltines, and
the time before that it was vomit.

When your mother walked in and put her gentle palm on
your forehead and cooed quietly, in one hand a mug of warm
broth, in the other, a mocking bird.

And the bright spirited change of television hues flashed blue
and white on the gray backdrop of your musty cave; while
above you, AquaMan looked out through the misty steam of
your ventilator, ever vigilant in his guard.

And still you can't breathe, and your mother's soup doesn't
help like it used to, and outside the window, stars whirl past
in a promenade of twisted dreamscapes and large walls with
shallow seats where the heater's turned up too high and you
wake, drenched in sweat, again.

Your mother isn't there and you're cold, your pillow's full of
tears and salt and dew and you can't breathe through your
nostrils and the blood pools in your ears and throbs behind
your neck and somewhere inside you know you almost knew
why you were so afraid.

But you still can't accept that some dreams have
no meanings.