

Mary Could Be Very

Crazy any day.
Her ears have gone to the woodwork.
Her eyes have become Blake's.
Saints move her walker & her wheelchair
the angels grease. See, she will show
The nurse narcs how she is trying
on her own & how the commode
is no trouble, & then maybe
they'll let her keep the 2 cigarettes
Allotted daily.

No. Mary is not self-pitying.
Mary is not lonely. Mary is not weak.
She no longer weeps at her room-mate's
dementia or for her good china
or her Continental breakfasts.
No, she no longer pines for her son's
visits dwindling the way her husband's
breath did when the priests came like caddies
on a course lost to swamp...

Passing, passing -
all of those robes, the roles & the habits...
Now Mary plays bingo, now she counts bumps
on the chair with her fingers, & the angels
are coming, & the saints, they are going to march.

Mary has felt them winking, whirling wands
to the top of the x mas tree.
They promise restored vision.
They promise hearing true as tuning forks,
& Mary waits quietly.

The nurse narcs approve, nodding for cigs,
reporting for virtue.
Mary's a living doll, they say, rolling eyes
over drug carts. Mary, the redeemed,
by this breakdown or that, she breathes
pure divinity. She is the bravery of patience
whose shepherds, whose flock, no,
shall not want