

## Nightmare, hello again

You sit in in the hall of the doctor's office  
amongst rows of chairs. This is annual. A woman sits close.  
Two chairs away. Then one chair. As she moves closer, your stomach  
tries to defy anatomy and crawl up the throat, but you swallow it down  
hard.

The woman *smiles*  
at you. You feel

like you are watching  
a cold child pluck feathers  
from a yellow chickadee.

Her hair is a nest, violently frayed, thick clumps. She must live here.  
She still wears the papery, white gown. There are greasy stains at the hem.  
She holds a plastic cup out, but you *don't want it*. You do not.

*You don't.*

But she pours it on your knee. And she giggles; her bones heave.  
*It's hilarious*. It's warm. It soaks into your blue jeans, forces  
into existence a sphincter in your throat that clenches. Closes.

Run down the hall. Your abdomen beats. And just in time  
you arrive at the window to see a miniscule, white pup  
stuck between pane one and pane two, releasing the slimmest  
thread of air. Your fingers do *nothing* but fumble with clasps until

pup body collapses into itself  
leaving only a clump of fur,  
feeble fluff.

A mass. A mass of hair is behind you. You know she smells the stink  
fermenting on your knee.