## SAM SAX Standards

and again the test comes back negative for waterborne parasites for gonorrhea of the throat and of elsewhere for white blood cells in the stool

this isn't always true sometimes it's a phone call from your lover sometimes it's your computer blinking on with news of what's wrong with your body this time

simple really how he says the name of a disease and suddenly you're on your back staring out the window onto a highway

suddenly a woman enters the room to wrap a black cuff around your arm and squeeze your blood till you're no longer sick

to slip a device under your tongue check if your sweat's accompanied by the heat it demanded

and aren't we all of elsewhere sometimes — the nowhere places you make yourself inside the hallowed chambers of the hospital — and inside the man's unsure voice

when he calls and is too scared to name the precise strain of letters you might share now what parasite might feed on the topsoil of your groin

what laugh track what tabernacle unlatched to let all that god in what bacteria spreading its legs in your throat as you speak

when the illness is terminal you drink an eighth of paint thinner all the color drains from your face

all those little rocks in your gut turned to buses — all those buses full of strange men each — one degree apart — all going somewhere and gone now

funny how a word can do that garage the body

what if instead he'd simply called to say epithalamium or new car or sorry