

Infusion Clinic
Joan Colby

Propped in recliners hooked by PICC lines
to bags of Vancomycin or CefTRIAxone.
Mary is determinedly cheery, face puffed, limbs like
toothpicks. John looks worse today, huddled
beneath a blanket. The room is always cold.
Jason, tall, young, muscular, is impatient with
the slow drip of healing poison.

I sit in a regular chair like the other wives or assistants.
His procedure takes 20 minutes. He's one of the lucky. He reads
the Smithsonian, an article about waves.

Waves of bacteria course through their bodies,
frothing with fevers and the shaking chills
of riptides that carry one offshore

the nurses are uniformly stout,
examples of hardiness. The wasted stare
from skulls defleshed with illness.
No one confides the source of their
infections. Privacy is a matter of pride
with so much lost.

The machines beep to alert
low blood pressure or diminished oxygen.
Fractals of information attend the living.
Maria arrives with her daughter
chatting in Spanish. She waves to me
as I scribble words to wish them well,
these sojourners on a ship called maybe.

Joan Colby has published widely in journals such as *Poetry*, *Atlanta Review*, *South Dakota Review*, *Gargoyle*, *Pinyon*, *Little Patuxent Review*, *Spillway*, *Midwestern Gothic*, and others. Awards include two Illinois Arts Council Literary Awards and an Illinois Arts Council Fellowship in Literature. She has published 22 books including *Selected Poems* from FutureCycle Press which received the 2013 FutureCycle Book Prize and *Ribcage* from Glass Lyre Press which has been awarded the 2015 Kithara Book Prize. Three of her poems have been featured on *Verse Daily* and another is among the winners of the 2016 Atlanta Review International Poetry Contest. Her poems are included in numerous anthologies, the latest being

Poets to Come which will be published in accordance with the Walt Whitman Bicentennial Convention, May 31-June 2, 2019. Her newest books are *Her Heartsongs* from Presa Press (2017), *Joyriding to Nightfall* (2019) from FutureCycle Press, *Elements* (2019) Presa Press and *Bony Old Folks* (2019) Cyberwit Press.. Colby is a senior editor of FutureCycle Press and an associate editor of *Good Works Review*. Website: www.joancolby.com. Facebook: Joan Colby. Twitter: poetjm.