

First beads of daylight

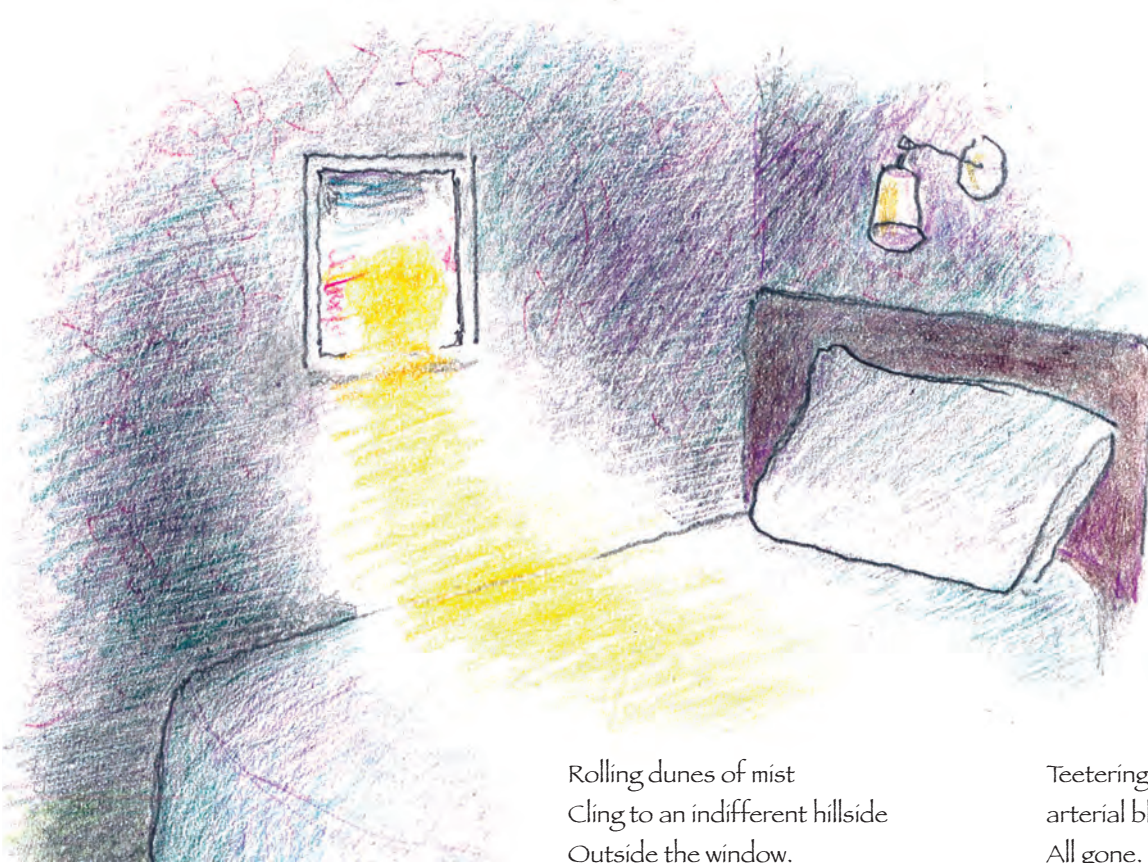


Illustration by Jim M'Guinness

Rolling dunes of mist
Cling to an indifferent hillside
Outside the window.

The sky is smooth,
Unwrinkled. An un-slept-on blanket.
It kept no one warm last night.

An even mood covers me.
Highs and lows are gently muted,
Worn down by the night's tumult of
chaos and care,
Filled in like putty scraped over chipped
glass.
Nothing terrible happened.
What's left is somber, averaged.

A jostle of clamorous thoughts:
Falling SATs, taking stairs too fast,

Teetering, hesitation, a spurt of
arterial blood.

All gone. Wiped away. Replaced
With this one moment, looking
Blankly through the pane.

I am here, and nowhere else.
Other realities cease calling,
At least for now.

I am, fleetingly,
Content—
Unemotional,
But not unfeeling.
I am present.
Cut and ground,
I'll soon be tossed back in
For another
Night of polishing.

— Nathaniel J. Brown, MD, PhD

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