

SMALL COMFORT

The patient lies
Paralyzed
Arms wasted
By his side
His forehead glistening.

A fly lands.
Then jerking
By degrees
With tiny forelegs
Rubbing
Its bristled head
Twitching
Mouthparts tickling
Not pleasantly.

The doctor enters.
In that instant
The fly launches
A crazy eight
Overhead
Before he goes mad.
The ventilator sighs.

The doctor sees
His patient's mute eyes open.
Acknowledging these
He smiles
Then circles the bed
Out of reach
To set a dial
Before he leaves.

Again
The ventilator sighs.

—*Samuel Durso, MD*