

Have Patience by David Sawkins

I hate staying here in hospital, they pump this special gas through the air conditioning. A reduction gas, it reduces people. Small patients are so much easier to handle and are less costly than the large ones. Smaller meals, littler tablets, easier to service. Have you noticed? that, after a couple of days in the hospital they always shift you into another bed, it is a smaller bed. You do not notice this because you have been reduced a little. Smaller beds means smaller bed linen, another saving, less detergent and hot water. Another thing that I have noticed is that all hospitals have more childrens wards now, the reality of it is, they are not children in them, just long term older patients in the very popular weeny size.

I always feel diminished after only a couple of hours in the hospital. 'She' said to me this time in, "Take off all your clothes and put this half a gown on. We want a sample of your urine in this bottle and make it a mid-stream one and put some stools in this little container as well, then go and lay on on your bed and take your gown off, I hope you brought a good razor with you, ours tend to get a little blunt after the twelfth patient. Just you lay still else I'll shave everything else off that moves in the breeze. You'll soon be like a billiard ball all over, legs and belly, bald, bald, bald, Ha!Ha!Ha!, just one of my relaxing jokes" 'She' then picks me up in her arms and kisses me on the forehead "Your a wee little chap, are you not! We like little ones". What on earth can I answer to that, I was'nt that little just yesterday, this rotten reducing gas always works quickly on me. I get carried over to the weighing machine and my light wei~ meets with her approval.

'She' sits me on the side of my bed and my hairless legs dangle there like two rolls of old parchment with toes. 'She' says,
"Look at his fairy legs!". Me, Me who sailed the seas at fifteen and a half, drunk and disorderly in the public square at Port of Spain Trinidad man, I got caught cheating at cards in the seamans mess, I swabbed the decks and climbed the mast and ahoyed everything in sight, I served in the British Army and fought many a fierce battle in the N.A.F.F.I. queues and I did jankers on me head. Me who' worked in the building trade for many hard years, I've been with a man in West Africa who spewed two hours of rum drinking down the back of a Dutch lady at an open air cinema; she called us the scum of the earth, in English. I begat five legal kids and once dated Eskimo Nell and now . I am reduced to fairy legs. I hate being here, it's all happened before, so many times, in previous lives, in other realms, other dimensions and I'm always the one that shrinks, why can't I be the doctor for a changer.

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