

## Sanatorium

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She was not told the meaning of absence  
why parents could not visit  
except on weekends — and then only for an hour.  
*The 1906 Home Handbook*

*of Domestic Hygiene and Rational Medicine*  
outlines the treatment for rheumatic afflictions —  
hot blanket packs, repeated. She  
remembers those who wrapped her body

in hairy blankets to preserve her rheumatic heart  
— remembers how the blankets electrified  
her body so the static in her hair and skin  
made a nurse jump back as though burned

by something cold. And she began to think  
of God as a story, not a question — as an infant  
full of milk, relentless, but not yet cruel.  
She remembers children dying in the next bed

almost every day, their freshly smoothed sheets  
their blankets neatly folded, as each morning  
hiemal sun rose shakily above the window  
inside which a verandah of wheelchairs wintered.

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Hot blanket compresses and high-dose salicylates were recommended treatments for rheumatic fever (Kellogg JH. *Home hand-book of domestic hygiene and rational medicine*. 1906).

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