

POEM

Close Obs

I'm curled into a ball
on a thin mattress on the floor
covered with a crinkly nylon sheet
smelling faintly of sick and piss.

Outside the heavy brown door
sits Len, muscly, tanned,
with the Mirror crossword.
Not much older than me,

he's done his fair share
of hurtling down corridors
readying needles full of Depixol
to slam into the arses of lunatics

like me I suppose.
As my sobbing slows
I hear him humming tunelessly
and clicking the end of his pen:

'Mate, your mum said
you didn't use to be such a dickhead.
Let's see. Try this for starters:
French for dead-end, 3-2-3?'

I don't know whether he's
smart enough to be taking the mick
but I'm damned if this mad man
will ever tell him the answer.

David Gilbert

Correspondence to David Gilbert; davidgilbert43@yahoo.co.uk

Competing interests None.

Provenance and peer review Not commissioned; internally peer reviewed.

Twitter Follow David Gilbert at @DavidGilbert43



CrossMark

To cite Gilbert D. *Med Humanit* 2017;**43**:134.

Published Online First 26 September 2016

Med Humanit 2017;**43**:134. doi:10.1136/medhum-2016-011087.1