

Sepsis

My kidneys were swollen rocks, pieces of bismuth abrasive against each flank. In the hospital, they put me on oxygen, morphine, Tylenol, Benadryl, intravenous antibiotics, and Valium. I was convinced I would sink. My kidneys would drag me through my blue hospital gown, the white flannel sheets, the thin mattress, the steel frame of the bed, the gray linoleum, the cement, the next three floors. I was convinced I would wake up in the dirt. I'd add to the collection of decay—a few more bones and rocks. Instead, a nurse tapped each of my wrists, and asked which vein more easily took a needle.