

## In the Gallery of Severe Head Injuries

my kid brother is still in college, caring  
for a man who tried to kill himself  
with a power drill. The task  
that has been entrusted to my brother  
is simple: *make sure the tube*  
*in this guy's throat doesn't pop out.*  
So he sits there, bedside, reading  
into the night. And instead of stars,  
the air is possessed by pinpricks  
of green light, skittering across a black  
monitor, as if the monitor  
was a deep field and the lights  
were tow-headed children playing  
long after dark. And instead of crickets,  
there's the rasp of a dead man's chest  
that somehow still shudders up and down,  
a heavy sound, as if inside, a smaller man  
drags an iron reliquary across a hardwood floor.  
What do you call this world, the images  
that haunt the unconscious body? There,  
in the hollow, perhaps the smaller man lets  
go of the container, stands erect, turns  
to let the sun touch his ruined face.  
His loved ones rush toward him. Birds  
flicker over everything. Some would call this  
a dream. I'm not ready to use that word.