

Richard Solly

CONVINCING ROSE

Breakfast is like this:
open the capsule
of theophylline
over her bowl of applesauce,
stir in the sprinkles,
then motor the spoon
like an airplane
down the table's runway.
It soars above
and loops to convince
her that breakfast
is a game that begins our day.
Even Lucy, the doll,
posed at the table
as if nothing is wrong,
wears a bandaid
over a stuffed arm,
left from our rehearsing
a doctor's visit.
Rose doesn't shake her head
when the spoon finally
comes out of the kitchen's sky.

Above the sink,
the shelf is an altar
for the nebulizer
that sprays a cloud
of medicines she inhales
into bronchial tubes.
Taped to the wall, a collage
of prayers and affirmations
help keep Rosie breathing
and me believing some morning,
as she wheezes into my ear,
she won't stick her finger
down her throat to unclog
mucous; I won't have to say:
it's all right, Rosie. It's all right.