



Volume 12
Issue 1
2017

Charm / Willa

Sarah Shirley

Charm

She flew in on a Thursday
Chirping an angry refrain.
I'm fine, I'm fine!

But why did you fall?

*For my sins, for my sins!
I gave the cat biscuits,
When clearly, the sod wanted steak.
He wove a charm around my feet,
And put clouds in my eyes.
But I'm fine, I'm fine!
Listen to my heart, it's strong, it's strong!*

And inside the wicker cage of ribs,
Indeed, another bird,
But no sparrow flutters here.
It's the steady slow flap of a goose forging on,
Soaring up and away from the winter

Willa

Willa is draped in hospital finery
Faded teal cotton embossed – HOSPITAL PROPERTY
But they mean the gown of course,
Not Willa!

Willa lies stretched, propped up on a bank of pillows
(She cannot lie flat anymore)
She offers a delicate paw, bird bones wrapped in parchment,
And says ‘just take the blood, if you can find any!’
Oh Willa.

Truth is, there seems no room for blood in Willa,
Queen of Room 12, her golden
Catheter snaking out from under sheets.
But something is keeping her alive. Perhaps
It is peppermint chocolate
And the memory of a hot day on the beach
When she wore her red dress,
And she laughed at the boys on the sand.

Sarah Shirley is a poet
and a final year medical student living in
Hamilton, New Zealand. Email:
sarah.shirley
21000@gmail.com