

A Good Sick Girl Never Gives Up

Darlene Young

A good sick girl would never give up.
She pushes on in search of a cure,
working as if all depended on her.
“Not knowing beforehand” what she should do,
she moves doggedly from doctor to doctor
and test to test, would never rest

except, of course when money is tight
(which it always is). A good sick girl
knows when to stop wasting her family’s money
on that which bears no fruit, the useless pursuit
of miracle cures

except, of course, for miracles
that come from God. A good sick girl
always seeks those, remembering Sarah
who laughed at the angel. She adds her name
to prayer rolls, requests heavy-handed
administrations, repeatedly and in variety

except, of course, when it’s God’s will
that she not be healed. And then she’ll yield
her will to God patiently, knowing he
will strengthen her back. She doesn’t lack
humility.

She would never complain
except, of course, to us,
her true friends, her safe space—
we answer with grace when she asks for help,
never notice, as we drop off casseroles,
her manicure, the craft she completed, though laundry
stacks up and the children run wild.

A good sick girl looks clean and neat
for her doctor so he'll know
she's not wallowing, know she wants
to get well.

But she mustn't look too neat
or he'll doubt that she means it
when she says she can't cope.

Being good, she won't question
the advice that he gives her,
and proves her desire for healing
with exact and detailed obedience

except for when
he's mistaken, which he often is. And so
a good sick girl will research her symptoms
herself, allow the guidance
of Spirit and common sense,

though she would never
Google her symptoms, an obvious
trick of the hypochondriac, proof
of negative thinking, something she avoids
like the plague (which she probably
doesn't have, though she'll check).

Nor would she chase after quacks
and shamans of alternate therapies,
knowing it is a waste of her family's money,
a pitiful lack of faith—

unless it's something God has led her to
by putting someone right in her path like a drunk Laban—
for example, that guy who helped Aunt Fern—
now *he's* obviously got a God-given gift,
and if she refuses to even give him a chance,
she's being close-minded, just giving up,

and a good sick girl never gives up.