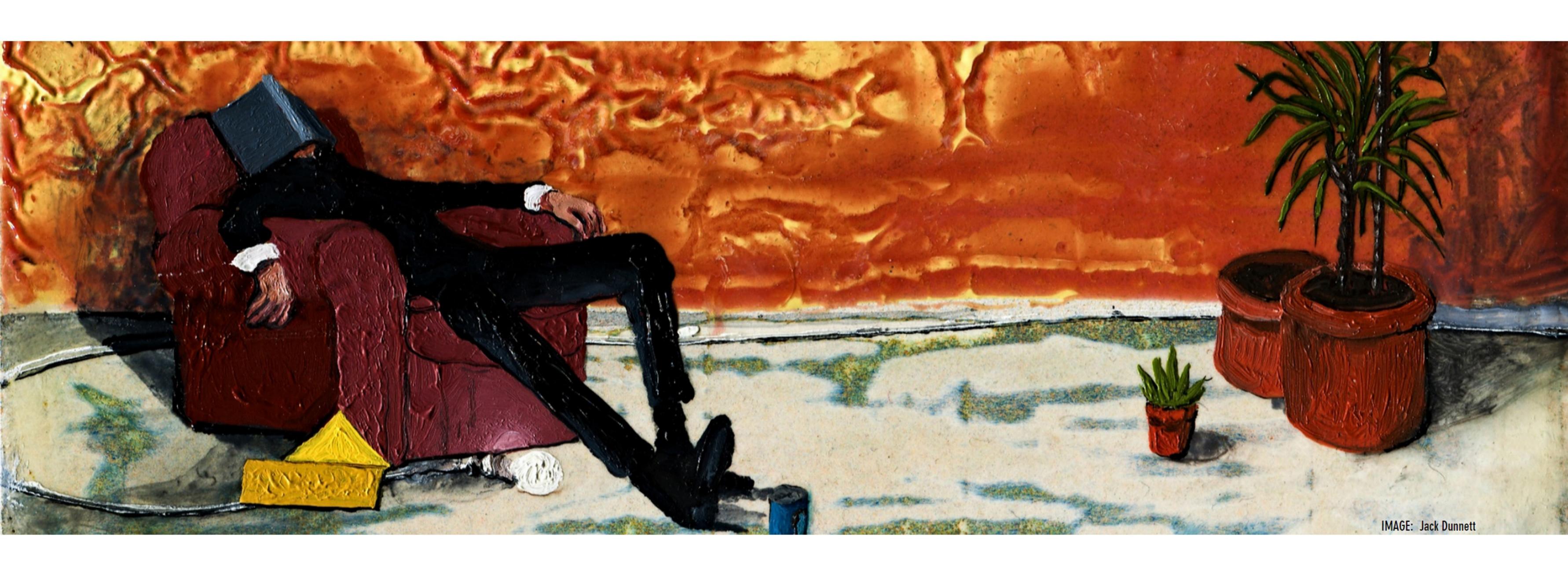
CRIBBED AND COUNTING

Anna Wagner



Anna Wagner is a graduate from Hamline University's Creative Writing Program. Her work has previously been published in Fulcrum Journal and Eastern lowa Review with nominations for Best of the Net, Best American Essays, and a Pushcart Prize. She lives in Minnesota and wishes it was sunny everyday.

We sit on the bed, cribbage pieces replaced with paper clips, and the board lies

between us.

There is a sun sinking
behind the curtains, a sky
we haven't touched

for eighteen days.

I almost forget
we are sick.

Fifteen two,
fifteen four,
fifteen six.

We try to tame fevers like red foxes. They run for weeks, and I think

about pressing our burning bodies together. To be over two hundred degrees, which is enough

to deactivate
a different
sickness. I reach
for any answer.
Pyrexia isn't meant
to last

like this. He counts his crib while I count Tylenol tablets. We wash them down

with lemonade we can't taste.

A symptom named
ageusia. Another game
we've had to play

for eighteen days.

I almost forget
we are sick.

Fifteen two,
fifteen four,
fifteen six.

