

SINGING IN BED

Catherine Stearns

Desperate, he'd had the nurses

Hang fishing line from the ceiling
To secure his music stand.
Once a womanizing trumpeter, now
An old man singing alone in bed.

He learned to turn the pages
With his tongue. He learned
To raise the strings of his arms,
Await someone else's delicate touch.

The last time I heard him,
His A and my A sharp—
Incapable of merging—nonetheless
Created a raucous sound:

Not a father's sonorities,
Nor yet the confetti of a harp,
Just a song sung

To break the silence.