

JULIA WHICKER

GRAVITY PICK LOTTERY MACHINE

Maybe you are giving me spinal meningitis right now
right now! It hurts! You may be giving it to me—
but I cannot make myself care because the twisting of my
spine around yours like the rod of Asclepius is hot,
like when you told me about trichinosis and said
every muscle inside me is engraved with uncountable
worms from undercooked pork and I replied *Are you giving
me spinal meningitis that you caught from your sick friend
in Mexico?* and you are saying *He and I never shared food or
drink except for that one time so maybe?* You may be giving it to me—
now the sky is wide open and guinea-worm stars burst from the
purple wound above us and my legs are wrapped around you like a
caduceus: we are circumgyrating. We are a gimble, we are a roll axis
of possible disease, underprepared, spinning germs together in a cosmic
lottery machine—

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we are mouth-kissing filter-feeders sucking the sand from each other's backs.
We are lumbar punctures, sticking each other with thick wide hollow
medical paraphernalia. We are diagnosing the problem. You may be giving it to me—
me, I accept this spinning and torque, I believe in the possibility of all future
tenses when I eat rare-ish meat. Me, I love consequences, evidence
smeared all over the agar disk, and so when I kiss you I am filled
with the heat of Linnaean taxonomy, bacilli, and vermes:
Lover, I am filled with risk.