

Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal

Volume 3 | Issue 2

Article 3

January 2004

Malaria

Lexi Rudnitsky

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Recommended Citation

Rudnitsky, Lexi (2004) "Malaria," *Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal*: Vol. 3: Iss. 2, Article 3.
Available at: <https://orb.binghamton.edu/harpurpalate/vol3/iss2/3>

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Milton Kessler Memorial Poetry Prize Winner

Malaria

Lexi Rudnitsky

In Guatemala I remembered the dead.
Friends no longer friends
insisted they had survived.
My mother smiled from her hospital bed.
Those were light-skinned dreams,
where all my pasts were sanguine:
the wine did not stain, the driver
swerved in time, we all understood
the reasons I came here.

This is a different decadence.
Mosquitoes gather by puddles
on the dirt floor. Rain warps
the splintered board I sleep on.
Outside: explosions or thunder,
murder or disease.
A doorless knocking into night.