

# Walking Home

For Jeff Smotherman

*William Waters*

So I'm walking home

and I keep thinking about you and Bill

Bill has cancer  
you have love

and I'm wondering  
which one is worse

at least Bill has all those drugs  
to help him out

and on the phone  
every time you said  
"we've done a lot of research;"  
"we have a great doctor;"  
"There's a hospital in New York..."

I heard you mean  
I love him  
more  
than my own breath.

So what's there left  
to do  
but hold his hand and  
hold his head  
as he pukes  
for the third time  
today

while  
just a little while ago

his cock was in your ass  
hard and rough  
lifting your back  
off the bed

and then dropping you  
down again;

and just  
    a little while ago  
    the heat  
        of his skin and sweat  
        burnt the back  
        of your legs  
            with a promise  
  
of forever

but now  
    as he lay on his side, asleep,  
    curled into a 40-year-old boy—  
  
    light-skinned and much  
    too small for a man so big

you wonder—  
    as you watch him sleep—  
        if he knows  
            that you are watching  
            him;  
  
    as you reach to hold  
        the hand that just held you  
  
    as you brush your finger across his cheek  
        —touching more than skin  
  
    as you lean your lips  
        to his

you wonder  
    if he knows

THIS IS

forever.