

# The Kept Man

*by* Jerry Ratch

I'm a kept man, I told them.  
But I lied.

Quit trying to  
blow up my balloons for me.  
I'm a kept man.

What is botulism anyway?  
Botulism, lyme disease,  
snoring,  
I have it all.

If the Titanic rises from the bottom of the sea,  
I will meet you on deck, in a deck chair.  
Fully dressed for a change.

Did you say you were a king?  
Or was that just  
aching?  
I need to know  
before we return to the bottom  
for another century.

I thought I overheard pre-recorded snoring  
on prepaid phones.  
I could've been misled or mistaken.

