

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.

