

# Scene from the Clinic

*by* Nick Seagers

I'm off dope for two weeks when I meet her. Walking the halls, one foot after another across the grooved tile. I see her seated, leaning forward with her forehead against the large front window.

This window, the glass, the frame, the wire between the panes, is the closest connection we have with the outside world.

"I'm sweatin' here," I say.

Cheeks beaded with sweat, she stifles a smile.

"What," I say, "they can't tell that it's fuckin' hot in here?"

The sweats I have are nothing like when I got picked up the first time. Sickness.

She won't tell me her name. The first day in the common room she was in the same seat and when I asked who she was she only snorted and fogged the window with her smile.

"Not that hot," she says.

No way to know why she's here, but scars and scabs can hold more information than a file or chart.

"Says you!" I keep things lighthearted in hopes I can win her over.

She laughs again, produces another splotch of steam, and from the lines at the corners of her eyes when she does this I see that today will be a good day.

