

1979

Coma

Dennis Schmitz

Follow this and additional works at: <https://ir.uiowa.edu/iowareview>

Part of the [Creative Writing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Schmitz, Dennis. "Coma." *The Iowa Review* 10.3 (1979): 106-106. Web.
Available at: <https://doi.org/10.17077/0021-065X.2504>

This Contents is brought to you for free and open access by Iowa Research Online. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Iowa Review by an authorized administrator of Iowa Research Online. For more information, please contact lib-ir@uiowa.edu.

Coma · *Dennis Schmitz*

done with myself, I asked
to lie down with the stroke victims,
to be one with those who keep themselves
in being by concentration,
the war deaths who wake in a civilian eternity,

the army re-ups, the cancer-sufferers
who adore their own dying
for whom the fear of living again

blurs the fear of death:
a fatigue not with pain, but with habit.
already I've practice-slept

the Vietnam War through—
if My-Lai happens it happens in this unrelieved
dreaming that blooms white-haired

out of the brainlight traced on the monitor
by my bed—an aging the technician
waits for before he calls the White House

& Mr. Truman answers that
he remembers me as a boy spread
sleeping across a pew tired of the Lord

who let the Chinese cross the Yalu.
my wife has grown older
by the same relentless science that keeps her

awake. why can't I die
of this blindness rusted into my head?
what I once saw I saw unable to be moved,

a scapegoat, a secondborn—
in group therapy the last one to answer,
to make a memory. only the prosthetic

heroes can will to pick up
this world—sweating, they flail, they tap,
they pinch for it as it rolls

out of the therapist's hands, very small.