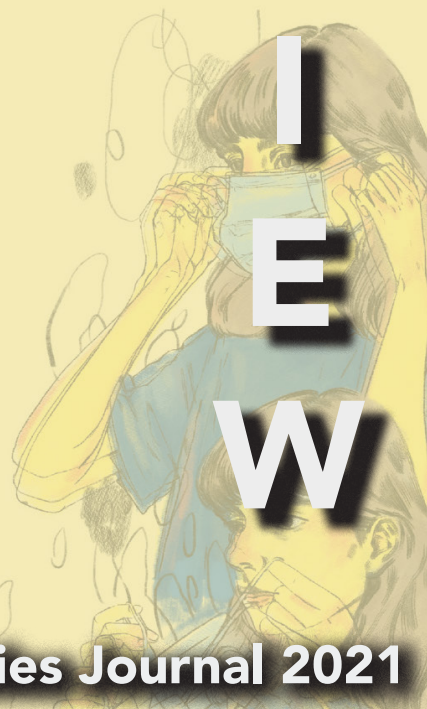




LONGVIEW



Calgary Health Humanities Journal 2021

The Longview

Journal 2021

Front and Back Cover:
by Maedeh Mosaverzadeh

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Dear Reader:

Welcome to the Longview,

The Longview Journal is an annual student-run, peer-reviewed, interdisciplinary, creative arts journal focused on the humanities in healthcare. With this collection of creative works describing the unique experiences of students and faculty, we hope to angle a creative lens towards contemporary healthcare.

The Longview was established in 2014 by a group of medical students at the University of Calgary. Our aim is to create and foster an interdisciplinary space where health and humanities come together, supported and united.

The mission of the Longview is to publish a selection of creative words and images about the nature of health care and the experience of health care workers in 2021.

We would like to thank our faculty mentor, Dr. Tom Rosenal, for his support of this project. We would also like to thank the entire Longview editorial team for their dedication in promoting the Longview, reviewing the submissions, and working to create the final project. Finally – thank you to everyone who submitted to the journal and to everyone who supports health humanities. We hope you enjoy reading and reflecting on these works.

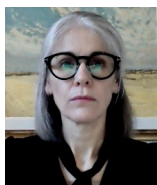
Longview editorial team, 2021/2022



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No Visitors Allowed

I watch as she lies still in her bed
Her eyes flitting as if counting the kernels of a popcorn ceiling
A low, machine hum fills an otherwise silent room
A lullaby of sorts

I wonder about her life
What her kids might look like
If they are my age perhaps
Where they might be right now

I wonder if she knows she is alone
If she understands why
If it makes her scared or angry
If there is something I can do

I wonder if she knows the lullaby will soon end
That she will not awake this time
She will spend her last moments surrounded by machines and
strangers
By no fault of her own

I tell myself
Her family is coming to take her home soon
I do not dwell
There are other patients to see

Poet: Gurvir Rai

School: Cumming School of Medicine, University of Calgary

Zebras & Chameleons

I am simultaneously both patient and nurse
graduate student and graduate
researcher and research subject.

*Prepare for a lifetime of surgeries, they say. Simultaneously, I
can't help you.*

Oxymorons of care and deflection through dismissal.
I have entered the kingdom of the sick.

A group of zebras is called a dazzle, a group of chameleons a
camp.

A zebra, they say, as if I have no choice. *A zebra*, we say.
Is it not the fault of medical school that I am deemed a zebra?
Am I not a chameleon, too?

The curse of an invisible illness is that you are a chameleon.
I attend specialists as a patient, but with the knowledge of a
nurse.

As a patient, I know how we are seen.
As a nurse, I know how we are seen.
I live with secrets,
secrets that influence my practice.

Why am I a zebra? I am a human.
I am not a zebra. Not a member of the equine family, not a
lizard, not a chameleon.
Why am I a zebra?
I am a human, just like you.

Poet: Jenise Finlay

School: Faculty of Nursing, University of Calgary

Mothering Heaven

"Mexican Heaven"

All of the Mexicans sneak into heaven
St Peter has their name on the list
But none of the Mexicans have trusted a list
Since Ronald Reagan was President
St Peter is a Mexican named Pedro
But he's not a Saint
Pedro waits at the gate with the shot of Tequila
To welcome all the Mexicans to heaven
But he gets drunk and forgets about the list
All the Mexicans walk into heaven
Even our no-good cousins who only go to church for
Baptisms and funerals
It turns out God is one of those religious Mexicans
Who doesn't drink or smoke weed
So all the Mexicans in heaven party in the basement
While God reads the bible and thumbs a rosary
God threatens to kick all the Mexicans out of
heaven
Spanish
So the Mexicans drink more discretely

"Mothering Heaven"

All of the Mothers stagger into heaven
St Peter has their plan on the list
But none of the Mothers have trusted their body
Since Hospital Care was provided
St Peter is an Obstetrician named Petros
But he's not a Midwife
Petros waits at the gate with the shot of Oxytocin
To welcome all the Mothers to heaven
But he's impatient and forgets about the list
All the Mothers waddle into heaven
Even the tokophobics who only know about birth
through movies and media
It turns out God is one of those radical Midwives
Who doesn't do medical intervention unless it's
absolutely necessary
So all the Mothers in heaven schedule pain relief
in the basement
While God reads the CTG and insists everything
is normal
God threatens to fail all the Mothers and champi-
ons the warriors
Breathe... hoo, hoo, hoo! That's it. You can do it.
Well done. Good girl!
So the Mothers share their trauma more privately

They smoke outside where God won't smell the weed	They talk in places where God won't blame them for scaring others
God pretends the Mexicans are reformed	God pretends the Mothers are satisfied
Hallaluah	Yes... push! Yeeess!
This cycle repeats once a month	This cycle repeats every quarter of a second
Amen	Congratulations
Jesus has a tattoo of La Virgen De Guadalupe covering his back	Jesus carries a baby in a sling wrapped tightly to his body
It turns out he's your cousin Hesus from the block	It turns out he's the supermodel Gisele
It turns out he gets reincarnated every day	It turns out he had two water births at home, against advice
And no one on earth cares all that much	And none of the earth Mothers are impressed
All the Mexican women refuse to cook	All the Mothers refuse to give birth naturally
Or clean or raise the kids or pay bills	Or eat their placenta or breastfeed or bond
Or make the bed or drive your bum ass to work	Or lose the weight or believe what they were told
Or do anything except watch their novellas	Or do anything except watch their diapers pile high full of shit
So heaven is gross	So heaven is a let down
The rats are fat as roosters and the men die of starvation	The lies are fat as bellies and the babies die of obstruction
There are white people in heaven too	There are caesareans in heaven too
They build condos across the street	They save lives in emergencies
And ask the Mexicans to speak English	And are offered to all the pregnant Mothers
I'm just kidding	I'm just kidding
There are no white people in heaven	There are no caesareans in heaven
Spanish	Hoo, hoo. Aghhhh!
St Peter lets Mexicans into heaven but only to work in the kitchens	St Peter lets Mothers into heaven but only under obstetric-led care
A Mexican dish washer polishes the crystal	A Mother massages her perineum
Smells the mules and hears the music through swinging doors	Smells the blood and hears the screams through the operating room doors

They dream of another heaven

They dream of an alternative safe haven

One they might be allowed in, if only they work
hard enough

One they might be deserving of, if only they
prepare well enough

Poet: José Olivarez

Poet: Pauline McDonagh Hull
School: Cumming School of Medicine,
University of Calgary

'This poem is inspired by the work of American poet and educator José Olivarez, who is the son of Mexican immigrants. As the descendant of family emigrated from Ireland and an immigrant to Canada, after hearing a snippet of Olivarez presenting his poetry on CBC radio I was intrigued to read more. Coincidentally, at that time, I was enrolled in a graduate course in the Department of Communication, Media and Film. Our instructor, Associate Professor Mél Hogan, had tasked us with creating a piece of writing in imitation of the style of another writer, and then share and reflect on our process. I chose to imitate Olivarez's poem Mexican Heaven because I felt an immediate and unexpected connection to my thesis topic of caesarean birth; particularly its controversial place in maternity care and the critical lenses through which it is viewed. I contemplated the often precarious journey to motherhood, filled with hope and expectation of an imagined future, yet invariably vulnerable to cultural politics, pressure and hegemony, and also luck. The resultant poem, Mothering Heaven, is presented here with kind and much appreciated permission from José Olivarez, alongside its direct inspiration, Mexican Heaven. I strongly recommend listening to Olivarez's performance of the poem (at the link provided) before reading my imitation.'

Anatomical Sketches: Heart



Anatomical Sketches: Hand bones



Artist: Nadia Bibi

School: Faculty of Nursing, University of Calgary

PANDEMIC

Outbreak

You never see my face,
I am eyes and a voice.
Only when my back is turned to you,
Can you catch a glimpse,
When I take off my blue and yellow armor.
Outbreak is violation.
This safe space, that was supposed to protect you, heal you,
cure you
is riddled with viral threat of death.
You are alone.
Even when you are free, you are never safe.
Paroxysm, pandemonium, pandemic.

Poet: Ambereen Weerahandi

School: Faculty of Nursing, University of Calgary

In Isolation: A fast descent to madness and a slow, bumpy ascent to sanity







Artist: Aleia Therese Guadarram

School: University of Calgary

'I used to be really good at making friends with different social circles. Like a chameleon, my mannerisms would subconsciously change depending on the environment I'm in, ergo my self identity altered quite frequently and I never really had a significant personality to hold.

When the pandemic hit, physical contacts have been cut off from all whom I've made friends with. Rather, I became acquainted with the mundane writing desk that sat at the corner of my bedroom. Surrounded by blank walls, lack of communication, and being overly occupied with school work, my sanity slowly slipped away without notice. Whenever taking a short break from working, my thoughts haunted me with fever dreams of panic, losing control, and feeling of instable of not using my time wisely.

My mind wandered through notions of fever dreams, one of which I recall writing down after I went through an episode. The nightmares felt like an incessant back and forth notion of photos that lead my consciousness to spiral rapidly into random but familiar images. Paired with throbbing pain in my head, time felt as if in a panic to move quickly, while loud background noises sought in desperation to catch my attention. Each banging sound escalated in volume, while the trebles in the sound thinned out. Reality and imagination integrated together as to create a pandemonium of debate between which is my real self or what isn't. My vision diverted into a bobbing notion of looking at the ground and then to the wall as this motion happened in repetition, trapping myself in a loop.

I felt like I was in a rut, stuck in the middle where I could neither find a solution to get better nor stay in the same mindset. At the time, no words could explain why I was feeling this way and what had caused it. Was I overworked? Have I lost touch with people? Nothing was able to distract me from the debilitating pain of constantly being extremely depressed. If I did open up to people about what I was going through, I thought I was just another problem waiting to waste their time dealing with it. Like a pressed weight on my chest, I had to lug around this hidden burden, especially during family occasions and online video chatting with my friends.

Friendly encounters were a temporary escape from the problems dealing with my inner-self and disagreements I would run into at home. By isolating myself, the perpetual fevered dreams, mental burnt outs, and having to face my internal problems on a daily basis, I met the biggest nervous breakdown I've ever had. I couldn't let other people fix my problems for me, so I had to do it myself. Therefore, I established a 1-to-2-year plan of rebuilding a balanced relationship with my mind, body and soul. By focusing on healthier habits mentally, spiritually, emotionally and physically, I had to learn how to self-love. I knew these aspects all combined are what truly affected my mental health and wellbeing, but it was not going to be a quick and easy fix.

During my mental health journey, I discovered parts of my mentality hidden by the surface level mindset I had to develop in order to get along with my peers. Being alone in the quiet with the loudness of my thoughts, at first it sounded like a combination of white noise of insecure, overanalyzing and overthinking mindsets.

Soon, by listening to my body and being there for myself as a friend, I started to appreciate my introspection and endless curiosity. My thoughts soothed from a white noise, to a controllable stream of consciousness, easily tuned into and out of, helped by meditation and mindful breathing.

By keeping the events that had caused a major breakdown at the back of my head, I would be able to caution myself if I were to spiral again in the future. The path to healing is not a linear journey, and the willingness to change habits and routines takes more than self-discipline to get yourself out of a rut.

At the time, I used to impatiently wait for an increased positive effect on my mood. I thought that one day, I would feel a sense of contentment, happiness and be in a state of high-spirits. But, this outlook and goal is simply unrealistic. Self-love would be to allow yourself to feel all senseless amalgamation of emotions nevertheless if they were to be happy, sad or simply being lost. By suddenly acting happy one day would be the same as putting a band-aid on top of a deeply festered, infected wound without treating it with great caution first. Most of the time, if one does not have the best support system, it takes a lot of work and willpower to create a significant change in one's life. This was the case for me, so I had to use art as an outlet for expressing negative thoughts and emotions.

Art had turned into a contemporary form of healthcare, or I would like to call it, self-love. A form of expression whereas the artist would reach out to individuals who deeply resonates within the context of the art they have created, while giving the audience the liberty to take each piece close to their personal experience.

My art style could be described as animals personifying human emotion. This idea had peaked my interest since animals are known to walk with an instinctual, determined gait, versus the sophisticated human cognitive thought. It would be interesting to see two very contrasting elements combined to one, whereas simplifying complex feelings of depression, anxiety and the process of coping, be translated into familiar and understandable animal phenomena.'

EMPATHY AND HEALING

Empathy

Whispering a genuine invitation,
From the sacred place of the heart.
Will you trust in me, precious one?
So I can do my valiant part.

Drawing near to you in this moment,
In a metaphorical embrace.
Holding your pain and suffering,
Giving you comfort and grace.

How have you been doing?
Through the years of agony.
May I help carry your burden?
And bring you new vitality?

Trauma of the years gone past,
Has held you down in spite.
Let me lift your weary soul up,
By all my strength and might.

Escape from the eerie silence,
Lost in the valley all alone.
I am by your side now and always,
Not afraid to hear your moan.

Binding the dark feelings that haunt,
Throughout the day and night.
Releasing you from their chains,
So you no longer need to fight.

Our intimate companionship,
To last together for all time.
Breathing life into your being,
And deeply satisfying mine.

Poet: Melissa J. Adrian

School: Faculty of Nursing, University of Calgary

The Power of Gentleness in Vulnerability

When crying out, "This hurts," the patient is being vulnerable. Her eyes show and see a future of uncertainty, pain, loneliness, and loss of control.

"Another test?" she sighs, "I thought I already had that in the morning?"

I remember the responsibility resting on my shoulders when I wear my scrubs.

Patients come to the hospital to heal their wounds, but in seeking care, they open the possibility of suffering further hurts—both physical and emotional.

To be vulnerable means: susceptibility to wounds.

Chronic illness leaves them opened and vulnerable, but the only effective treatment for vulnerability is authentic care. And vulnerability is: a precondition for healing.

But how do we, as healthcare workers, respond to vulnerability?

How do we heal the broken and open?

Gentleness.

Hospitable listening.

Carving out moments for deep listening allows us to host strange ideas.

Gentleness opens rooms to know and care for others. Set aside different opinions, personalities, or value systems.

...

But are patients the only ones vulnerable in this relationship?

To be hospitable to new thoughts and voices is a vulnerability in itself. So we understand what Saint Francis de Sales said, simply:

"Nothing is so strong as gentleness, nothing so gentle as real strength."

Poet: Matthew Tang, Krista Wollny

School: Faculty of Nursing, University of Calgary

'My encounter with Christina inspired me to write this poem. In my fifth term as a nursing student, I met Christina, which is a pseudonym used to maintain patient confidentiality. She was an 85-year-old woman who was admitted for fungal sepsis with comorbidities including chronic kidney failure, osteoarthritis, type 2 diabetes, and ovarian cancer 30 years ago.

Alongside recurring headaches and "general aching," Christina missed her husband who had recently developed dementia and was staying at home. Despite lacking her support system, she was pleasant and cooperative. However, behind her optimistic smile, Christina was sustaining a myriad of physical and emotional burdens.

After a long day of medical exams and being assigned to a new room, Christina experienced a moment of conflict with the healthcare aide (HCA). While transferring her onto a stretcher, the HCA asked her to, "Take a step over," but Christina stepped in the wrong direction. Upon asking Christina to step again, Christina snapped, "Can you stop telling me what to do. I understand!" When we got Christina on to the hardboard, she cried out in pain, "This hurts." The HCA mumbled, "I've been working with her for years. I know her. She always makes things hard." Christina ignored the HCA, turned to me with pain in her eyes, and let out, "She never listens to me. She's always telling me what to do."

After this conflict, I felt uncertainty and questioned myself how I could have responded better. Because I felt like this, I realized how necessary it was for me as a nurse to approach patient's moments of vulnerability with an authenticity that operated principally through hospitable listening. Seeing Christina's vulnerability inspired me to write this poem about compassionate gentleness. I hope you enjoy this piece and take gentleness with you in your everyday life.'

The Color of Healing

Yellow

Memories blossom
in the same way hope does—
slowly at first,
but then all at once.

Sometimes you can't see it
at first glance,
but if you pause for a moment
in the chaos
that comes with growing flowers
you will notice
that hope is seeping into
every crevasse it can.

Red

Sometimes you might dance
to the tune of power,
manifested in beating hearts
and the pulse of the ground
beneath your feet,
while other times
you might march
slowly
in broad daylight
towards the
dark night.

Even during the march
there is always
the promise
that tomorrow will gift
another dance.

Blue

Reassuring hands,
the kinds that
plant seeds
during a thunderstorm,
those are the ones
that go unnoticed

White

Sometimes it isn't
sound that makes
something loud
but instead, it is
the presence it has
in lives
lost and found,
which is why
when it snows
you might think
it is silent
whereas I
perceive it as deafening,
because I have seen
the way that
light as a feather
can embody
a roaring waterfall.

Green

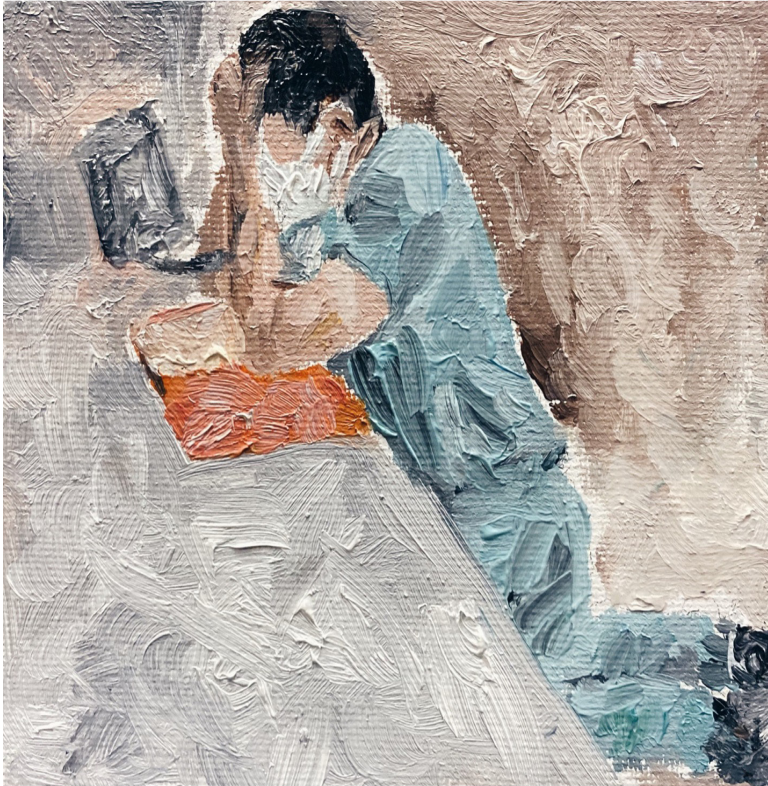
Some moments
are short
but also span
across infinity,
because after the sun sets
and we are done
dancing through
roaring thunderstorms
while watching
flowers grow,
we are left
with the memories
of hope running
through chaos
and breathing life
into the unknown.

Poet: Alisha Ebrahim

Affiliation: Volunteer Program, Alberta Children's Hospital

'Each stanza is meant to evoke a certain colour and leave lots of room for interpretation through the usage of metaphors and symbolism rather than a list of objective facts or obvious experiences.'

With a Heavy Heart



Artist: Randip Dhaliwal

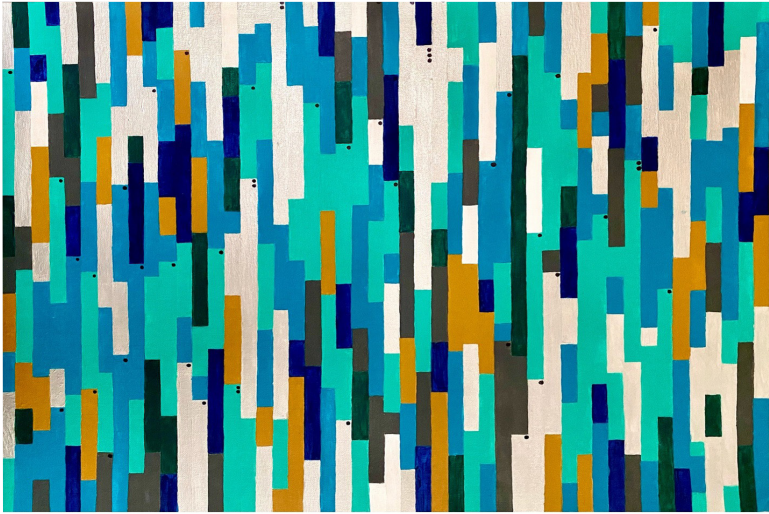
School: University of Calgary, Faculty of Nursing

'I was inspired by the resilience and strength of frontline healthcare workers when I came across a photograph showcasing an ICU physician calling a family member to inform them that their loved one had died from COVID-19. The image resonated deeply with many healthcare providers as it offered a small glimpse into the unfortunate reality of the battle we face every day to protect Albertans and keep them safe. I have recreated it with oil paint and hope it provides a glance into the uncertainty and sadness that the image conveyed. To all my fellow healthcare providers on the frontline, thank you for your bravery, courage, and unwavering selflessness. This one is for each and every one of you.'

REFLECTIONS AND INSIGHTS



A Year In Color



Artist: Larissa Lautner

School: Cumming School of Medicine, University of Calgary

'As a medical student in the year 2021, learning medicine is unlike any year before us. With the pandemic resulting in a primarily online learning environment, the way we learn about medicine and the way we form relationships with our fellow medical students is exceptionally different. Although many students have thrived in this learning environment, many students have found it isolating and uniquely challenging.

In November 2020, I was reflecting on this notion, and I decided that I wanted to document this experience in some way to reflect upon my life as a medical student during the pandemic. So, for the past 365 days, I have asked myself how my day was and painted one tile on a canvas accordingly. If it was an amazing day, it was painted silver. A great day, turquoise. Good days were aqua green, and relaxing days were yellow ochre. Neutral days were grey, boring days were dark blue. Stressful days were dark green, and bad days were white. If I had more than one day the same in a row, I added a black dot to the corner of that tile.

Although a year in everyone's life would surely look different, this is what the year 2021 looked like for me.'

These Hands of Mine

I melt into the coolness of the pillow
It has not felt the warmth of my being in far longer than desired
A dull ache in my back signals a deep sigh as my eyelids fall
heavy

Scenes flash across my consciousness like an old movie
Hours spent contracting as tears pour from her eyes
Gears grind to pump a constant stream of medication
Into a body not prepared for the work it needs to do
Chatter floats in from the hall oblivious to the trauma occurring
within

The transformation of former parents to be
 Into nothing more than two broken hearted individuals
 Their future family crumbles with each push
 These hands of mine reach out to catch the infant before me
 Born in silent perfection

His lashes softly lay upon his cheek
The stillness in his chest evoking a solid lump in mine
I have no answers as the mother cries out "why!"
Her world shattered by the hush of the monitor only a day ago
Her world forever changed by my words
"There is no heartbeat"

Remembering, I pull the quilt snug below my chin
As a single tear marks its path along my face
Too exhausted to allow for more I drift off to sleep
My breaths barely given a chance to even
BEEP BEEP BEEP

The call of my pager startles me awake
But was I even sleeping?
Waves coming every four minutes following a clear gush of
fluid

Her second time around, this could be quick
My heart pounds as I stare at these hands of mine
This is not a repeat of last night
I pull on the scrubs that lay at the ready by my bedside
Tie my hair back with a scrunchie that earns its keep

Within minutes I'm out the door
The harsh bite of two am frost slams into me as I venture to the car

Its engine barely cold from my last attendance
Upon arrival, I enter to rhythmic sounds of breath
Tranquil strums of guitar, fairy lights, a peppermint diffuser
A finger to the lips as the father leads me down the hall
Gentle sloshing of water in a tub as her hips sway to and fro
I lay my supplies along the floor
As she turns her swollen belly towards me in offering

Doppler at the ready
 These hands of mine tremble as they reach out to a spot just
 below her naval
 Breath catching, heart clenching, until that familiar sound
 Swish swish, swish swish, swish swish
 A strong babe within
 Another wave begins to build as I remove my touch from her
 skin
 Her rhythm resumes
 Innate, well-attuned
 Her breath acts as my cue
 Trust is given to the instinctive urge
 Whispering encouragement, the father waits
 A surge of power propels the infant into the water
 These hands of mine aid in lifting the babe to the breast
 Tears drawing shimmery lines down their cheeks
 Not out of sadness, out of joy
 Streaks of pink, yellow and orange paint the sky
 As a single squawk breaks the silence of the room
 I smile
 Briefly lean my head against the wall
 Close my eyes and let out a breath I hadn't realized I was
 holding
 Leaving them to bond, I head for home
 Kick off my shoes, pull the scrunchie from my hair
 More mamas to see today with bellies full of possibility
 These hands of mine pass over them to discover the being
 inside
 These hands of mine hold knowledge from centuries that came
 before
 These hands of mine that carry loss
 These hands of mine that guide life
 But for now, these hand of mine need rest
 As there will be more life to guide in coming days
 My eyes pause on these hands of mine
 My midwife hands

Poet: Ivy Fraser

School: Bachelor of Midwifery, Mount Royal University

'I wrote this poem as a day in the life of a midwife. I have been working as a nurse, doula, and postpartum support, and I am currently completing my first year in the Midwifery Program at Mount Royal University. This poem speaks about missing plans with family and friends, lack of sleep, encompassing grief and sheer joy that can accompany the practice of a Midwife. It does not sugar coat the immense commitment that Midwifery is, not only as a career, but as a lifestyle. I did not enter into Midwifery lightly. I dreamed about it for years, a fought for my place in this intensely competitive program. I have my eyes wide open in preparation for the rigorous journey that will be the next three years of the program. I am prepared for the highs and lows that Midwifery brings, and I cannot wait to share those with my clients.'

Dear Me

For those days when
You cease to feel alive
Breathing becomes a burden
Heavy on your chest
Drowning in the waters of your queries
Pushed deeper by the weight of how, when

Take a second
Detach
Become an observer
Embrace the action of simply being still
Watching, floating

Look down upon the monotony, daily life
Infusing power with presence

Not perfection
Nor precision
Presence
Watching the water
carry you to
shore

Poet: Maahika Mehta

School: Bachelor of Biomechanics, University of Calgary

Contributors

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Nadia Bibi

Randip Dhaliwal

Alisha Ebrahim

Ivy Fraser

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