

1st place, poetry

alphabet hospital circa christmas 2002

by Christine Ha

A is for acrid aromas of antiseptic.

B is for bed pans full of bile, bubble-less bed baths, and the bashful body being bared between bedsheets.

C is for closed curtain but not covering the constant cries over cramps.

D is for doomed for dead: dead legs, dead arms, dead heart, dead spirit.

E is for e m p t l n e s s .

F is for fishy food, fixed “fresh” for famished fools.

G is for Grim Reaper (see D).

H is for the “Happy Holidays!” hanging heavy above our heads.

I is for incredible itching (see side effects of M), insomnia and insatiable appetite (see side effects of S).

J is for apple juice, orange juice, grape juice; served with (see F).

K is for knocking knees caused by uncontrollable kinesis.

L is for loneliness.

M is for morphine and MRIs at midnight.

N is for nurses and neurologists never knowing enough about Neuromyelitis Optica.

O is for optic neuritis and occupational (see T): obsessed with relearning how to use objects.

P is for physical (see also T).

Q is for questioning quitting.

R is for rarity: rare autoimmune disorder and rare rest and relaxation.

S is for Solumedrol, a steroid infused intravenously for inflammation.

T is for therapy.

U is for unable to urinate and “Ugh, I’m upset!”

V is for vagueness of prognosis.

W is for wheelchairs in the walkways.

X is for eXile and eXhaustion.

Y is for YELLING AT GOD!

Z is for zero control.