
POETRY | FALL 2013

DNR

By Amir Adam Tarsha

It's a painful miracle that we don't truly understand how to live,
Until the raw material for doing that living has been stolen away.

There will be no signs.
Cosmic largesse? Largesse of any kind—I don't think so.
Only the delusional will claim a "calling."
I've approached medicine with a blue-collar work ethic,
That might even make my father proud.

Who has time to consider the ultimate question: life after death?
Who has time to consider a more important question: life before death?
The answers won't come in the form of words.
Language has always been the most digressive channel to understanding.
In 89 years, 38 within these walls,
little moments of beauty and of course many more moments of cruelty
Pile up,
Right on top of your sternum it seems,
And press, press, press.
You will feel the answers.

I'm a healer waiting to die.
And as I lay here praying for forgiveness,
I swear that I can almost hear the universe holding back a laugh.

I have three letters tattooed just above my heart,
Next to the year my sister died.

I think she would understand.

Amir Adam Tarsha is a medical student at the University of Miami Leonard M. Miller School of Medicine, who hopes to specialize in psychiatry. He received his B.S. in psychology and liberal arts from the University of Wisconsin-Madison and his M.S. in clinical bioethics from Mount Sinai School of Medicine. Tarsha's poetry and prose have been featured in two journals in Madison, WI.

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