

POETRY | SPRING 2020

Home Visit

By Katie McNeil

When my wife
of fifty-eight years
comes home tomorrow
it will be the end of our lives.
She will return with nurses and machines and
as much pain medicine as she likes.

Our children and grandchildren have flocked to the house.
The kitchen is immaculate.
There are beautiful, dying flowers perched on every ledge
as if I want to watch one more beautiful thing die.
The wall calendar full of doctor appointments
will clear up soon.

Our bedroom is a mess.
Adult diapers, dirty clothes, half-empty pill bottles litter the floor.
I do not let the children past the doorframe.
When they argue and wag their fingers and talk about hygiene
I tell them
There are some things you need to go through alone.

Katie McNeil is a third-year medical student at Dell Medical School in her hometown of Austin, Texas. Since childhood, she has used creative writing as an outlet for processing the world around her. From writing songs for her guitar to editing her college literary magazine, she has allowed this work to guide her. McNeil plans to pursue residency training in Internal Medicine/Pediatrics with the goal of providing equity-focused primary care across the lifespan. When she is not writing or studying, she enjoys cuddling with her dogs and watching *Gilmore Girls* on repeat.

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