
POETRY | FALL 2018

Brain as Timepiece (Administering the Clock-Drawing Test to My Patient With Dementia)

By Jennifer Wolkin

Circle, drawn
geometrically sound
but each number stands
outside its perimeter
like lost digits

& when I ask set the time
to 10 minutes after 11 o'clock
assessing your ability
to abstract
the #2 as symbol
you place an "X"
over the 11 & 10
continuing counter-clockwise
until the 12 is gone, too, as if

you/are/erasing /time

as if, the clock is glaring
with time's toll—

your brain is being
"X'd Out"

ventricles, widening & widening

while disease devours
you-

the you
that is organ
tissue, at least,

until all
that remains

are those
who miss

you.

Jennifer Wolkin is a health and neuro-psychologist, speaker, mental health advocate and mindfulness-meditation practitioner. She is currently pursuing an MFA in creative writing and literary translation at Queens College. Her poetry has been published/forthcoming in a number of literature journals. Her non-fiction work, translating and sharing the science of brain research and mindfulness, has been published in Thrive Global, The Huffington Post, Mindful.org, and PsychCentral among others; a compilation can be found on her blog BrainCurves.com. Wolkin is most passionate about writing at the intersection where the mind, body, brain and spirit meet, giving voice to those who have sometimes literally lost theirs by bearing witness to their pain (and resilience) through her writing.