
POETRY | FALL 2019

Learning Pronunciation

By Lauren Fields

And suddenly I find myself beside
the static air of a still hospital bed.

My thoughts retreat to grade school
when we learn to fold our mouths
like fitted sheets around jigsaws of letters –
an anabolism of phonemes, and slowly

I return to this room where
the resident transmutes the palpation
of beat-less blood and frozen
pupils into time and the text
of a certificate, and slowly

we egress into the hallway, heavy
with dole and muffled weeping
as his children and grandchildren
hold each other, searching our eyes
for solace as we fold condolences
around their grief, and slowly

we return to floor work
and the exigencies of the day,

as the slow closure of eyelids
replays itself, and I wonder
how he said goodbye
and if he felt it was enough.

Lauren Fields is currently a third-year medical student at Columbia University Vagelos College of Physicians and Surgeons. She has been writing ever since she was little, and poetry has been an important part of her journey to, and through, medical school. Her poems have been published in *Blackberry: a magazine*, *Linden Avenue Literary Journal*, *WATER Literary and Arts Magazine*, *Reflexions Literary and Fine Arts Journal of CUIMC*, and *The Morningside Monocle of Columbia Law School*.

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