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POETRY | FALL 2017

## Intro to Physicianship

By Lala Tanmoy Das

It is his first graded test on breaking  
news –unexpected, the still-

birth, planned perfectly until  
the sudden tear in a branch

of arteries –and the racing  
heart has stopped underneath

a cage of supple ribs, lips leaking verbs  
unspoken, the six month fetus—

now, a pale blue stillness. He is scored  
on the professionalism with which

this tragedy is conveyed –perfect pitch,  
narrow wit, optimal empathy, points even

for the right amount of eye contact –  
a course on the basics of physicianship.

He conveys with poise; the rubric  
of grades checkered in his mind –hiding

the crackle of voice, holding tears back  
behind his pale curtain of lids. Later

that night he will come home to me,  
sit by my side and scream

hysterically, and I will hold his hand  
along the meander of veins, my skin— a raincoat

against the torrent of pain swelling out  
from the corners of his lips.

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**Lala Tanmoy Das is a full-time healthcare and pharmaceutical consultant. He resides in New York City and is an enthusiast of short form poetry. His poems have appeared in several journals including *Thought Catalog*, *Allegro* and *Chelsea Station*.**

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