
POETRY | FALL 2018

Captain's song

By Marta Christov

Out in the harbor's the best place to be
right where the land is far enough
and seagulls glide along scooping
unsuspecting fish. I'd rather be there

than in this emergency room,
doctor telling me I'm dying.
She says: a blood pipe – my aorta
is slowly tearing in my abdomen,

I won't survive the surgery
at eighty one. A weak spot had
developed and each time my heart
pumped blood, it got weaker.

All those times of thumping: love,
births, deaths, infidelity; an old friend
standing by the mailbox unexpectedly
or when that foolish cat got in the pantry,

were bringing me right here
to this back and belly pain, my weakness

On the water, tugboat accidents happen
in slow motion: everyone knows and
yet it's thirty minutes 'til the crash
there's even time to call the insurance man

My stroke of luck: young lady doctor
to keep me company
'til the crash, when the sea
comes to swallow me whole

Marta Christov is a practicing nephrologist in Westchester County, as well as a research scientist studying phosphate regulation in health and disease. Christov has a particular interest in making science and medicine easier to understand for her patients and the general public. She is currently using poetry and essays to reflect on her experiences as a caregiver and a patient family member.

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