

POETRY | SPRING 2021

## Suture

By Orly Farber

Quickly it became normal  
I now expect the blade  
to give way to yolk-yellow fat  
as they pull muscle apart  
four hands, two on each side  
reveal a bubblegum stomach  
mulch-speckled liver  
into which cancer buries its roots

people think surgery is all knives  
but the four hands grasp metal tweezers  
cautery crackles through tissue  
the field littered with plastic and blue paper  
tubes and silk ties

you're all vessels and organs while asleep

I watch your heart push  
against the domed diaphragm  
a barrier between cavities  
sky stretched taut over tumor

once they've pulled the knotted roots  
the margins cleared as far  
as the eye can see  
I, a student  
get to sew the final touches

hunched over  
threading needle into cut skin

careful, I think, be careful  
it's only normal for them

this opportunity to survive

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**Orly Nadell Farber is a graduating medical student at Stanford University School of Medicine and an incoming surgical resident at Brigham and Women's Hospital. Orly's writing has previously appeared in Intima, STAT News, Scope and the Boston Globe. She hopes to carve out time to continue writing throughout the next phase of her training.**

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