

POETRY | SPRING 2023

With Gadolinium Enhancement

By Jacqueline Redmer

Today I am asked to see your body
as it takes on new function and form.

In this time of the New Moon
I consult the medical device shamans

who see things with magnet machines
their visions carefully inscribed in the text

I interpret. My voice softly repeating words like
“prominent reactive changes” and “adjacent mass effect without lateral shift.”

Suddenly my hands are in my white pockets
looking for a sacred anchor, a ritual object to hold onto.

I watch time spin by, then stop -
knowing that a mass with peripheral enhancement,

central necrosis and vasogenic edema
should never be found in the brain’s white matter.

I look out the window and notice the leaves
have already fallen from the trees this year.

I see now that there isn’t enough time
and yet, I have all of the time in the world -

both are illusions
the shaman helps me to understand;

because the ventricles, the sulci and basal cisterns appear unremarkable,
because in the end even that doesn’t matter.

Jacqueline Redmer works as a family medicine physician in rural Wisconsin. She is also the mother of three young girls. She started writing poetry during the Covid pandemic to steady herself during the pauses of a busy life. She is currently a student in the Columbia University CPA Narrative Medicine Program. Her favorite place to write is in the backyard sauna.

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