

# Mental Status Extrication (MSE)

*I, poised on the edge  
of reason, sway.  
While you, weighing differentials,  
strike a diagnostic match  
igniting fiery thoughts and  
cogitating a multi-axial symptom overload.  
I, wording my life, flounder.  
Gasp, a fish on the table.  
You and I fray over  
shattered mirrors reflecting only  
I in mine and you in yours.  
You ask about my mother.  
She was there, but not where  
I, could find a history  
In the splayed shards that  
You, compose into me  
With an assertive air.  
Pill purveyor, dream voyeur.  
I have seen izangoma\*, priests, witchdoctors.  
Did they see me? I cannot know.  
You a doctor of Which? When? What?  
Questions to throw my bones.  
To read where they lie.  
To determine my status of mind.  
I rise unpatient-like and cross a canyon in bare feet,  
encountering you midway, adrift.  
You trying to put yourself in my shoes  
You still in your own feet.*

\*South African Zulu diviners who use methods including the throwing of bone fragments to divine causes and treatments for physical, psychological and spiritual ailments.

**Thirusha Naidu**

**Corresponding to:** Thirusha Naidu, Department of Behavioural Medicine, University of KwaZulu-Natal, Durban, South Africa; Naidut10@ukzn.ac.za

**Competing interests** None.

**Provenance and peer review** Not commissioned; internally peer reviewed.



CrossMark

**To cite** Naidu Thirusha. *Med Humanit* 2015;**41**:e5.

*Med Humanit* 2015;**41**:e5. doi:10.1136/medhum-2014-010635