

POEM

The remaining questions

you may ask about
 deformed structure: a white root onion bulb behind eyes, or
 boggy green-grape bulging under knuckles, or the green
 sprouts shooting from the carina, or the bifurcation
 of open-lung
 shaped as a bird's breastbone: sensual, white, snowy, open paths:
 the things that remind us of the first cut in surgery, or me of
 his legs apart in the evening;
 you may ask about the paper-mache of our environment
 mapped on the undressed body: a raspberry rash
 or the leaky shimmer of virus-vesicles
 nailed newly, painfully, on her back as
 new shingles for the roof of her chest; or the
coracoid: the raven's beak
 and the writing desk of shoulder tissue where it perches, or
 the way the *sella turcica* sits precariously
 atop the equine mind; the *lumate*: that deep, slow, concave
 dimple-bone poised in the hands of
 our root-skinned darlings as they bath us and
 promise us poetry;
 you may ask about the diffuse, metabolic whirring,
 the humming invisible that makes chefs weep as they chop:
 the electric ions in motion in blood:
 a tick in potassium, a splash of acid, a white cell—

but

some questions are the stationary swept aside
 on office desks to make room
 for hurried lovers: whether he loved him and whether
 the rectal tumour makes it painful
 to love him still;
 or whether she, in older age, ever wants to take a man
 with her teeth and whether she feels she can,
 if she wanted to: but we must not ask
 about the unsnarled body's desires
 so acutely preserved, laid with shy hands on the breakfast table,
 for daily swallowing, for tucking in;
 or whether my stethoscope
 feels like a man's metal-cold, unwanted hands
 beneath her breast; or if the barring of
 his fresh, lit, sparky cigarettes in hospitals
 was, all along, behind
 his refusal to stay.

Yasmin Jajarmi

Correspondence to Yasmin Jajarmi, McMaster University Michael G DeGroot School of Medicine, 1319 Bunsden Avenue, Mississauga, Ontario L5H 2B3, Canada; yasmin.jajarmi@medportal.ca

Competing interests None.

Provenance and peer review Not commissioned; internally peer reviewed.



CrossMark

To cite Jajarmi Y. *Med Humanit* 2017;**43**:e8.

Published Online First 2 December 2016

Med Humanit 2017;**43**:e8. doi:10.1136/medhum-2016-011131