

Poem

## Grand Rounds: An Impossible Life

Survival.  
That's the name of the gene: Survival Motor Neuron.  
Ironic that we say her problem was  
Not enough "survival".  
But in a way  
A proteomic metaphor for her impossible life.

Not possible, life without SMN,  
So she used some transcripts  
From the other copy  
And found a way to live.

Not possible, a "normal life".  
Not possible, a regular class.  
But you don't need muscles to think  
So she found her way to Law School.  
Travel? Not possible said the railway,  
So she took their "not possible"  
To the Supreme Court  
And made it possible for everyone.  
Love? marriage? Not possible.  
Wrong.  
You don't need muscles to love.  
They found a way.  
The docs said children were not possible;  
"But not inconceivable!" she laughed.  
A favourite joke  
To go with the photo.  
They got one thing right: this was no normal life.

What's not possible  
Is to introduce  
My patient, my friend  
With impersonal initials.  
She was *not* "C.M."  
And she was never "a case".  
She was Claire  
And she made the impossible happen her whole life.

She would have laughed  
To know that when I heard she had died  
My first thought was  
"Not possible."

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