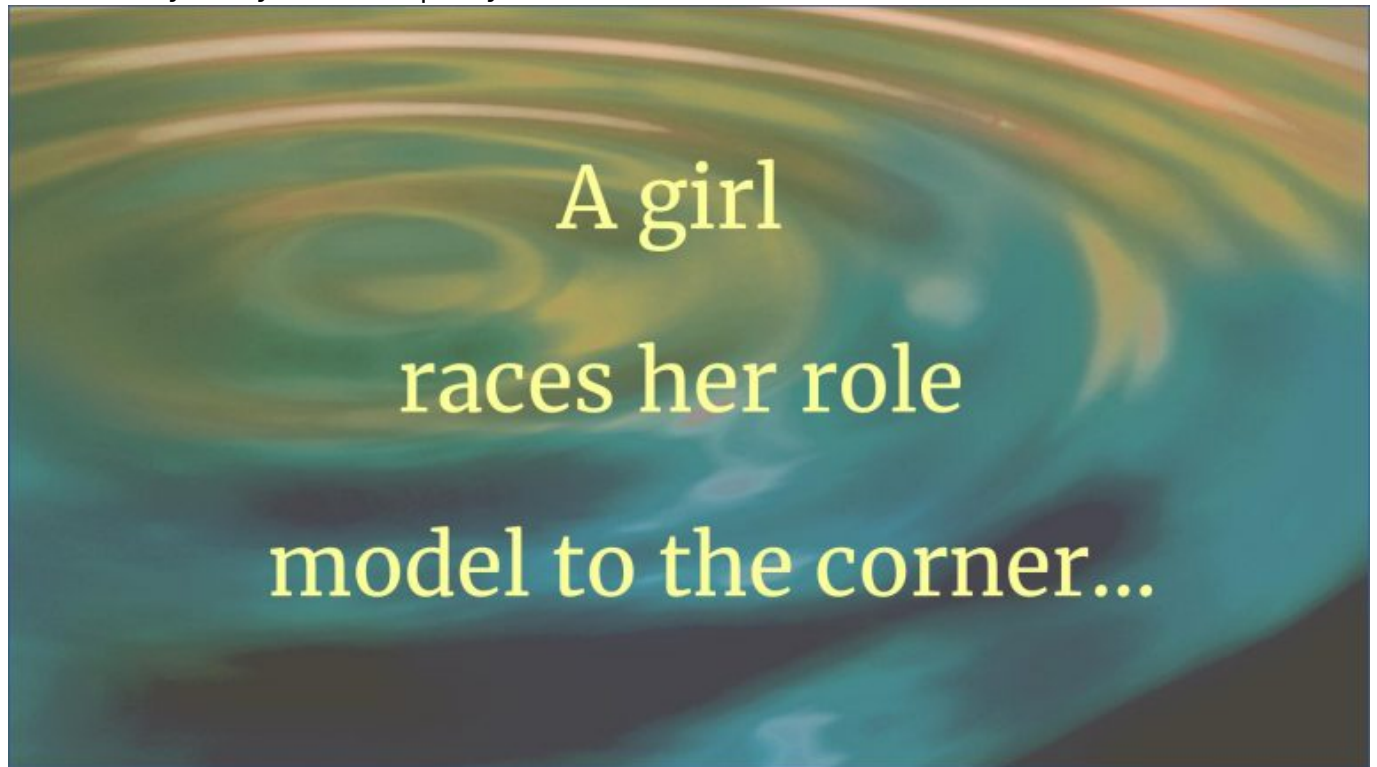


Educating a Surgeon

Category: Poems

written by Mary Brandt | May 28, 2021



My grandmother's bed bounced high
But I lost the pillow in my hands
Four stitches in the small town
green tiled emergency room
where peering intently into the mirrored light
I was mad because I couldn't see

From her purple kitchen,
windows full of bougainvillea,
she watched my grandfather, who,
forgetting his painful heart,
ran to rescue the cat,
returning victorious
and short of breath
chastised by her shaking head.

She put marks in that kitchen
on the door jam where we grew
mixing the batter for waffles
Grinning as she put in the nuts
which we always asked for
(even though she always put them in)

On the kitchen table
I learned to play solitaire,
Her years and years

of battle penned in stacks of small spiral notebooks kept next to her bed
by the Bible and her years and years of struggle in journals reverently kept

I raced her
To the corner
when I was old enough
to beat her
but still couldn't
(secretly) proud that my grandmother
was so
Strong

She sent
a quilt the day I graduated
from medical school
having defended me
from the ladies of the quilting bee
standing up
when they said I only got what I got
because I was a girl
and she said No—
it was because I was
Good