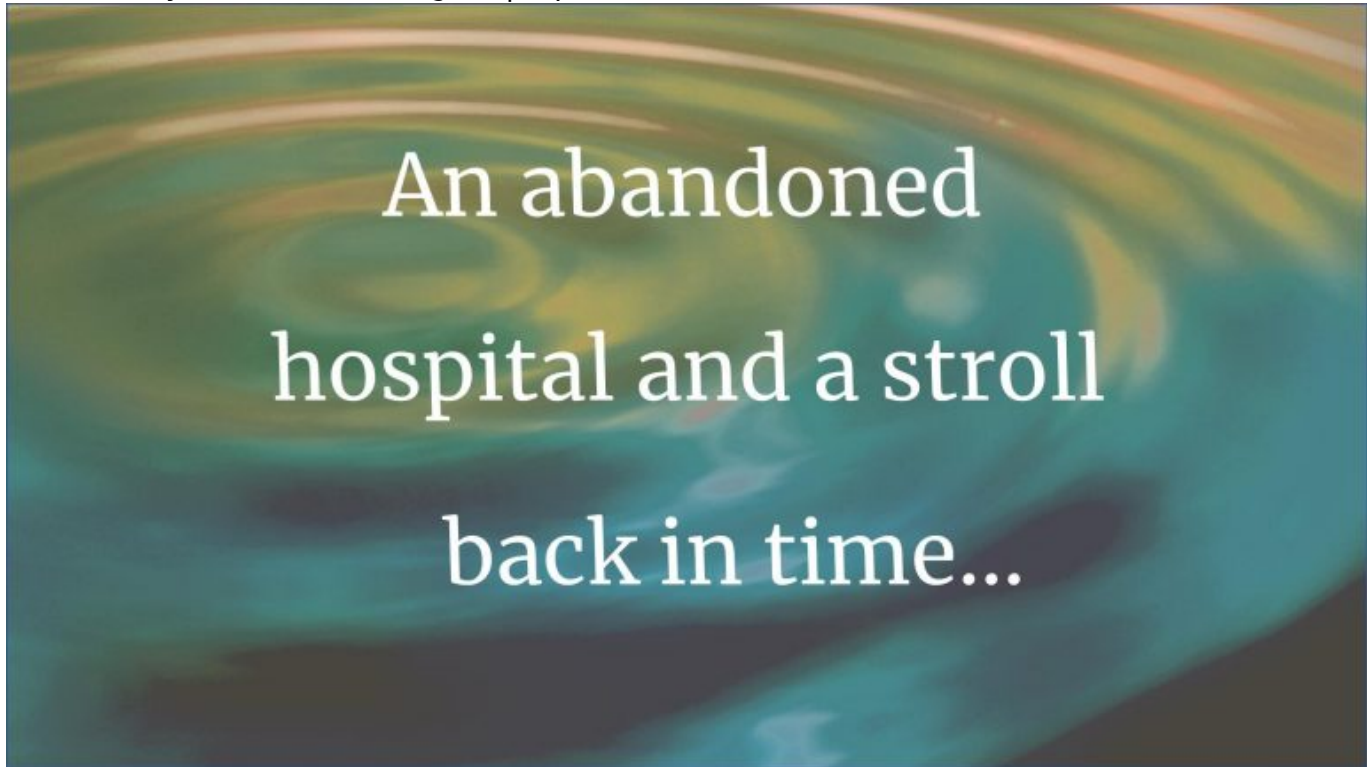


On the Grounds of a Former State Mental Hospital

Category: Poems

written by Tabor Flickinger | April 24, 2020



An abandoned
hospital and a stroll
back in time...

Through wounds in whitewash, brick edges crumble
To red dust. Weeds pierce the interstices of paths slowly
Giving themselves up to trackless overgrowth
Are all shapes broken that differ from expected forms
Or is this slant just as proper to a cupola as symmetry?
Not if it lets the rain in, I suppose

Ivy crawls across arched gaps and up walls, peers
Through windows still barred with a lattice of iron wrought
To contain disordered minds, later prisoners, now shadows
Plaster peels within the chapel like a shedding skin
A pipe organ shrouded in silence and a plastic sheet
Thrusts its peak through a hole cut for it in the ceiling
Once a surface yielded to a shape triumphant
In its irregularity, straining toward a heaven undreamt of
By the common parallels and perpendiculars
A name is still etched in stone above a doorway
And chiseled in the negative space of empty uteri and
Snipped vas deferens of those deemed unfit
Nameless, two thousand tombstones sink into the hill
Some bear a trace of number, others worn to mute rock
Wild roots birth the trees that reach for open sky