

Inside the Hospital

Category: Poems

written by Kendall Madden | January 17, 2014

Kendall Madden

It's a desert in here—
the way they suck
the air from one
compartment to another.
I'm parched—
forgotten rain,
blanched mollusk
without the sea.

My stiff face
tries to smile
at a wilted patient.
Pink-tongued lilies
once in a while
overcome the disinfectant,
stale sweat,
with hothouse perfume.

Outside the window
a view of roof,
helicopter pad.
We speak in grays and blues
our eyes watch
the brown bird
lift into the sky.

About the poet:

Kendall Madden is a fourth-year medical student at Stanford University. She holds a BS and MS in environmental science from Stanford and spent several years before medical school doing environmental-health research on the effects of agriculture on water quality in South Asia. She is interested in the ways in which the environment and health influence one another.

About the poem:

"This poem was written about the physical hospital environment and the ways it can impact patients and healthcare providers."

Poetry editors:

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