

Lightheaded

Category: Poems

written by Ellen Cole | June 13, 2014

Ellen Cole

Lightheaded, as I so often am
when leukemia fevers sweep over me,
I fail to notice when I begin to rise,
feet bidding the floor goodbye,

I say, *Brian*, but you,
your eyes shut,
Beethoven's *Moonlight Sonata*
whispering in your earphones,

do not see me wink out the window
like lamp light, the lawn glittered
with glow-worms, echoed above
by the stern slow music of stars.

I blow northeast carried
by prevailing winds, pass
like fair weather into morning,
drift over Newfoundland.

The sea is frozen into strange shapes,
waves solidified, spray stands like mermen
in the arctic air, the sky's blue bell
pinched into a funnel, soars above my head.

A young bull seal, his head bashed in,
half-eaten fish held in his mouth, floats
above me. Seal and fish turn their eyes
upward where light tubes into the unknown.

My hair flaps like a mariner's flag.
My mouth, agape, still holds your name.

About the poet:

Ellen Aronofsky Cole is a poet, actress and teaching artist. She's taught at Round House Theatre, The Writer's Center and Interact Story Theatre and has received several grants from Montgomery County Arts Council. Her poems have been published in her chapbook, [*Prognosis*](#) (Finishing Line Press, 2011), in [*The Little Patuxent Review*](#), [*The Washington Post*](#), [*Potomac Review*](#), [*Innisfree Poetry Journal*](#), [*Ars Poetica*](#), in the anthology [*poem, home*](#) (Paper Kite Press, 2009) and elsewhere.

About the poem:

"This poem was written during a time when I was very sick with a leukemia-like illness, myelodysplastic syndrome, or MDS. The disease would have been terminal if I had not been given a bone-marrow transplant, which I received in 2009. During that period I was swept by fevers every few weeks in strange, almost predictable intervals. At one of these times I was sitting with my husband in our family room and began to imagine what it might be like if I passed away while I was sitting there, in this most comfortable and familiar place. The poem grew from that point."

Poetry editors:

Johanna Shapiro and Judy Schaefer