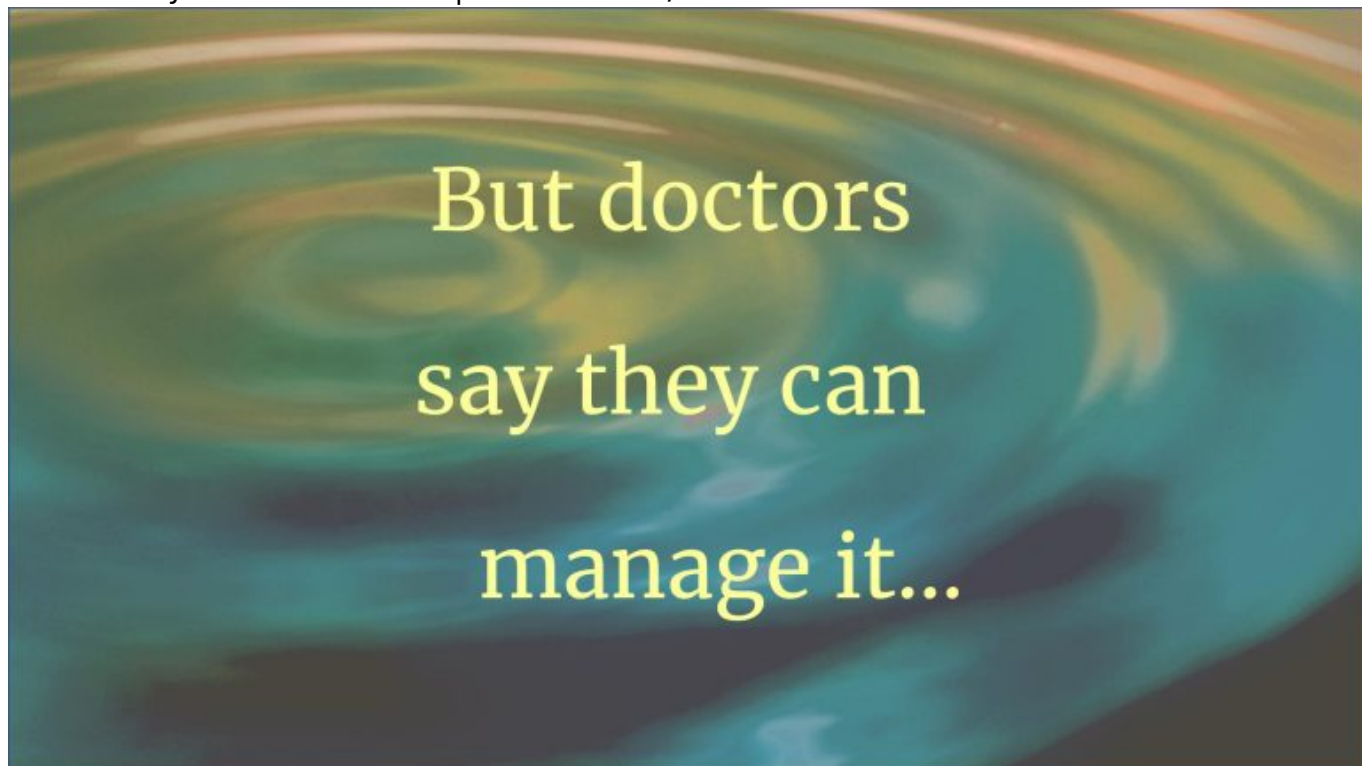


# My Friend Sandy Has Ovarian Cancer Too

Category: Poems

written by Laura Altshul | October 27, 2023



She'd moved west to Seattle; by phone  
we compare treatments, numbers,  
chances.  
Hanging on, she says: we are survivors.

I flew to visit before we knew—  
browsing in bookstores, eating pastries,  
strolls by Lake Union. She brewed tea, I gave her  
Lucille Clifton's good times before I had to leave.

Her diagnosis came soon, mine  
a year later. An uncommon cancer,  
with no cure.  
But doctors say they can manage it.

Chemotherapy, surgery. Infusions, pills.  
Experimental drugs almost killed her—  
in the hospital for twelve days,  
I couldn't reach her until the fifth.

I've tolerated treatments. So far. She has not.  
Living day to day, thankful for walks, movies, books.  
Discussing how to end it when all is too much.  
We could stop eating, stop drinking.

At some point, we'll know.

We'll tell each other, try to visit  
one last time.