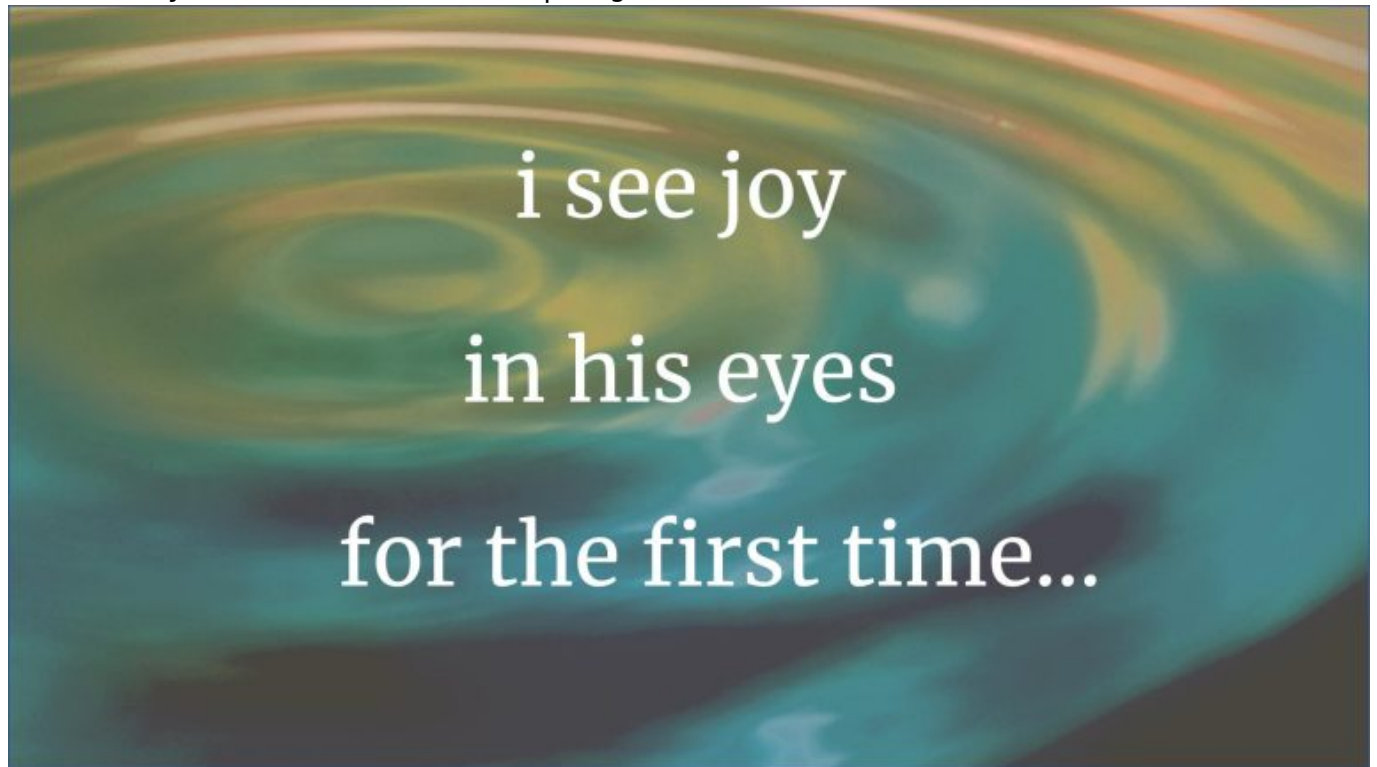


Neuro Consult No. 2

Category: Poems

written by Olivia M. Dhaliwal | August 25, 2023



we enter
there is
one emaciated body, encased in ivory blankets
and
one clear-walled plastic bag
hanging from the edge of the bed, ominously filled with red liquid
i feel my stomach churn

we interrogate this small man
he tries to answer, twisting his lips into the shapes of words
but muscles disobey
and his eyes flash in frustration, fade back into glass
severe dysarthria status post multiple strokes, secondary to cocaine use
i was warned

the nurse enters
she
calmly empties the bag of bloody urine
brightens, says, there you are! awake finally!

his face cracks into a grin, lips spill, crooked white teeth emerge between
i see joy in his eyes for the first time
and i wonder about all the pieces of his life
that do not fit into my consultation note
that have conspired to land him in this hospital bed
with his crooked teeth and tiny frame and glazed eyes

and i wonder about all the parts of him
that i won't get to know the way this nurse does
and i wonder why
his eyes never glisten like that when we walk in