

# november

Category: Poems

written by Allie Gips | November 7, 2014

## **Allie Gips**

tucked into the chaos of the emergency department  
is a single room with stirrups, a floor spackled with blood,  
& a woman whose face betrays nothing.  
the bodies of all those i have touched who have then  
died pile before me like so many broken eggshells  
so i stand against the wall to distance myself from her  
& her cramping uterus, her dark red clots that fall  
like sleet, her blank eyes that stare strictly at the ceiling  
while we busy ourselves with machinery: the speculum,

the ultrasound probe, the specimen container to bring  
to pathology as if their reading will serve as some kind  
of an answer. the team talks about passing the products  
& i know they mean products of conception but i can't  
help but imagine her endometrium as the entrance  
to a hair salon stacked with glossy tubes & bottles  
that promise silkiness, sleekness, sexiness, & for a brief  
second the coursing blood is nothing more than manic  
panic hair dye ready for a night on the town & we are not  
here, we are anywhere but here, we are just five women  
crowded by the bar talking about the dj talking about  
the drink special talking about the man with the scruffy beard  
about falling in love about getting married about having  
babies babies babies—

& there, i am crashing back down  
to where the transvaginal probe  
is covered in a lewd condom & lube  
& when we slip it inside of her  
we can see that she is as empty  
as her upward staring eyes.

## **About the poet:**

Allie Gips is a native Mainer and a fourth-year medical student at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, in New York City. She is applying for residency in emergency medicine.

## **About the poem:**

“Miscarriages were one of the sorrows I was least prepared for when I entered my third-year clinical rotations. They highlighted the divide between the clinician’s and the patient’s experiences: for the clinician, they are so

common as to seem entirely physiologic, while for the patient, they represent not just the loss of a pregnancy but the loss of an entire imagined childhood, from early playdates to high-school graduations. While I don't pretend to understand what this woman went through that night in our emergency department, this poem is an attempt to bear witness to her loss."

**Poetry editors:**

Johanna Shapiro and Judy Schaefer