

Remembering the Beginning

Category: Poems

written by Jacqueline Dooley | November 16, 2018

Jacqueline Dooley ~

I was unprepared
for the feel of your hair pulling free
with every brushstroke.
I wasn't up to autumn
from the side of your hospital bed.
It seemed too much
for the universe to ask.
But, like you, I was choiceless
as I drove through November streets
the colors, drained and faded,
like your face when the chemo went in,
reduced to nothing more
than what I was when you were born.
I covered your exposed head.
I tried to stop your tears.

And now?
I'm wondering about faith.
Where should I place mine
if not in IV poles and gloved hands?

About the poet:

Jacqueline Dooley is a writer and entrepreneur living in New York's Mid-Hudson Valley. Her essays about parenting a child with cancer and about parental grief have appeared in [Pulse-voices from the heart of medicine](#), the *Washington Post*, [Longreads](#), [Modern Loss](#), [Mothers Always Write](#) and [Good Housekeeping](#). Her poems have been published in [Chronogram](#) and *The Healing Muse*.

About the poem:

"I wrote this poem when my fifteen-year-old daughter was on hospice. I had been thinking of the frantic first months of her diagnosis, at age eleven, and comparing them to her reality during the early months of 2017, when she was dying. I found myself wishing that we were back in the thick of treatment, because active treatment had offered tangible hope. My daughter was fifteen when her oncologist told us he couldn't do anything more, and we had to face the fact that all the treatment she'd endured ultimately couldn't save her."

Poetry editors:

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