

The Bodies Green and Blue

Category: Poems

written by Krupa Harishankar | September 6, 2014

Krupa Harishankar

*Reflections from the anatomy lab
overlooking Central Park*

Reluctant, the same green
light over that copse of trees
and sheet of lawn glares and
bends through the lifted-open
cage of ribs, branched veins,
and cragged spine. Exposed,
my hands appear on the gurney
as a child's. The one across
needled grass applauds small
palms, not distant, but sound
mutes here. Joy does not carry
heft like limbs of the corpse
before me. In layers of blue
latex, the uniform tint of a pond
rendered from afar—its depth
imprecise—I glove and delve
into the viscera, leaving this
abdomen a cavity. I wonder
what hands have touched you.

These muscles are oblique,
I know, I cannot hurt you or
the child done playing, lawn
darkened. You have passed
away. The child's short, hapless
stature may never have been.
Memory dims. Child, body, we
keep no gender, no age. No color
can live in such an absence
of light. I know not how you
have remained with me, so
here: take my blue and green,
what shades I have. My hands
have not yet learned to save
for myself any sense of being.

About the poet:

Krupa Harishankar is a second-year medical student at the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai, in New York City. She earned her BA in creative writing from Columbia University, and her short works have appeared in such publications as [The Brooklyn Review](#) and [Kartika Review](#).

About the poem:

“The experience of gross anatomy lab, so often regarded as a rite of passage for first-year medical students, provided inspiration and perspective for this poem. The stark contrast between the confines of lab and the vast expanse of Central Park that stretched beyond its windows reinforced the notion that, regardless of how many structures and mechanisms we were to learn in this space, we could not know the life paths our ‘first patients’ had walked out in the world.”

Poetry editors:

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