

The Hallway

Category: Poems

written by Colleen T. Fogarty | May 18, 2012

Colleen Fogarty

Sitting here, waiting to teach a medical student.

My eyes lock

onto the windowed display cabinet of anatomic pathology specimens.

Aging bottles of shriveled dun-colored parts, pale reminders of bodies once vital.

My thoughts drift

my rib pain, localized, continuous, nagging.

my breast cancer, localized, excised, treated...just over a year ago.

What pains my rib?

Mets?

Muscles?

These tumor specimens cut too close.

I got my daughter to kindergarten; what about sixth grade?

About the poet:

Colleen Fogarty, an associate professor in the University of Rochester Department of Family Medicine, has dabbled in poetry and prose most of her life. Medical school temporarily killed her creative muse. In the years since residency, she has published creative work in [Health Affairs](#), [The Journal of Family Practice](#), [Family Medicine](#) and [Medical Humanities](#). She practices and teaches writing fifty-five-word stories with colleagues and residents and edits the "55-Word Stories" column for [Families, Systems, and Health](#).

About the poem:

"This poem is about an experience during a teaching session that brought me, momentarily, in touch with my own mortality."

Poetry editors:

Judy Schaefer and Johanna Shapiro