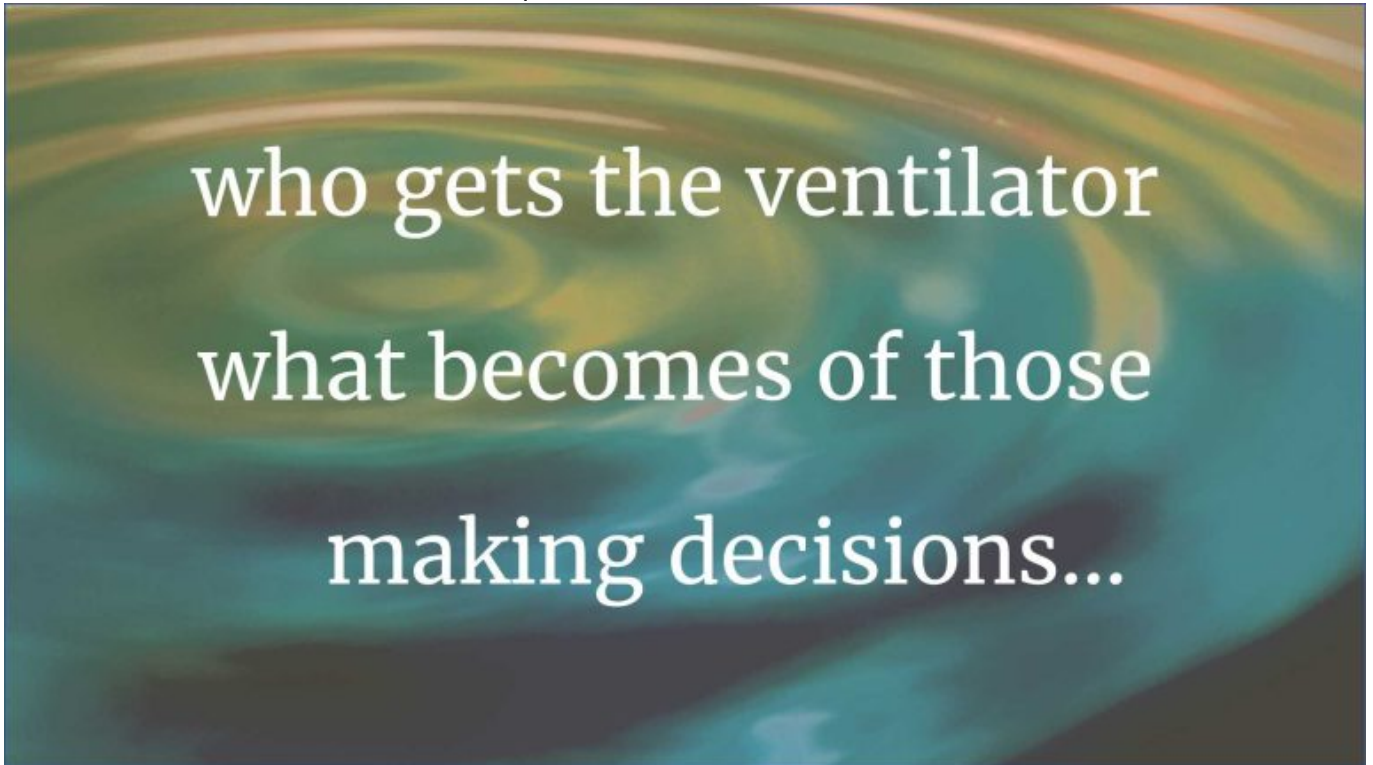


Time & Again

Category: Poems

written by M. Cynthia Cheung | October 31, 2025



COVID wards 2020-2021

For the sake of the present / let's just admit that thigh-deep mud & poison
gas & running into machine gun fire / still belong to us all the glass-eyed /
survivors who said sundown was almost worse than morning slaughters / night
when stretcher-bearers could finally reach the duckboards / run toward the
day's groans caught / on barbed wire / surgeons waited in casualty clearing
with their indelible ink two / possibilities / *attempt & no hope* by midnight
under the flare of kerosene they would've plowed through how many limbs
entrails & skulls at least a hundred per surgeon per night / months / years /
in no way do I compare this to a pandemic but maybe / nature of human memory
the definition / of nature how many *don't believe the lies* & destinations /
you never return from / who gets the ventilator what becomes of those making
decisions it's almost / the opposite of a siege inside the hospital walls /
the gasping / is it shock / we had to tie down people's hands to stop them
pulling out the breathing tubes air had / a taste what happens / on a front
so far away / I think those in charge call it *wastage*