

CREATIVE ARTS: POEM

Just another diabetic

Rubayet Arefin

O what can ail thee, Med-student-at-arms
Alone and palely loitering?
It is now 1:00pm at the geriatrics ward
Smelling of urinary incontinence

O what can ail thee, Med-student-at-arms
So haggard and so woebegone?
Your body is strong
Yet your spirit is weak

I see ulcers on thy leg
With hopeful sorrow and reluctant pride
The time has come
Forego your pride

I met him on the ward
What happened — a faery's child
His face was Parkinsonian but his smile was Angelman
Flowers were by his bed

Now I stand growing flowers of the strongest
Roses with the prick of the gab
He looked at me as he did understand
The pain of the strongest

Stand up Amputee!
The way I remember you
This is the language of the defeated
If only our roles were reversed, you would say there is no meaning...

My face remains dry
It just happens to be raining on a sunny day
Sorrow is not the legacy I wish to impart
As the clinks of whisky echo through the quiet room

I see pale warriors
My brothers and my men at arms
They cried — “La Belle Dame sans Merci
Thee hath in thrall”

They talk to me now, not in third-person of course
The glasses are a sign that I am not insane
Stand up Med-student for now is not the time to rest
If hell awaits me, I have no regrets

Can you understand that?
The house officer continues on
The registrar continues on
The consultant continues on
Perhaps then I can rest

For my starved hunger I fast
Be patient
Be patient
Flowers take time to grow

And this is why I sojourn here
Alone and palely loitering
It is now 1:00pm on the geriatrics ward
Smelling of urinary incontinence

About the author

➤ Rubayet Arefin is an aspiring poet from Palmerston North studying at University of Auckland Medical school. His current residence is the North Shore where he can often be found playing with his dog on Milford Beach.

Inspired by the English Romantic poet John Keats, this poem aims to evoke how this medical student is captured in a cycle of routine regarding death much in the same way a young knight (In La Belle Dame sans Merci) is captured in a cycle of love by a femme fatale mystical figure. Rubayet is one of the winners of the Creative Arts Competition for Issue 29.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the support provided by Dr Christopher Mysko & Simon during the preparation of this piece.

Correspondence

Rubayet Arefin: rubayet.arefin1@gmail.com