

██████████ (“The Passage” – poem)

Hi ██████████. For me, this poem really captured the strange, but real connections between student and cadaver, first based on the contrast between stillness and motion, then woven inextricably by your imaginings about the journey of her life. By seeing yourself poised at the start of your own journey into medicine and healing, you link your life and your path with hers. I hope over the next 3 years you will find many ways to keep that sense of connectedness with your patients.

██████████ (“Rap Poem”)

I don’t know much about rap, but I did like the edgy, cynical, sometimes confrontational tone you achieved. It’s easy to fall into saccharine sappiness writing about dead people, and you avoided that trap. Instead, you seem locked in a struggle with your cadaver, in which quite unexpectedly and miraculously resolves, albeit faintly (“dimkest of lights”). Thanks for this good work.

██████████ (“From Fear to Honor” – poem)

What a nice tribute to your mother. So many people teach us so much along our ways, it’s nice to express our gratitude occasionally. And I really liked your use of near-rhymes, whether intentional or not. Their slight “offness” prevented your poem from being too treacly, and conveyed to me some sense that everything in life, as in anatomy lab, eventually fits, but not too neatly.

██████████ (“The Voice of the Cadaver” – poem)

██████████, this is a really good example of point-of-view writing. By imagining not only the life, but the voice, of your cadaver, you bring her to life. I like the role-reversal you create: the dead woman encouraging her student-physician to be bold and brave and reassuring her about the outcome. I hope you can remember that, although you are the one training to be a healer, the doctor-patient relationship has many reciprocal aspects, and often patients (just as you imagined with your cadaver) can help heal their doctors if they are allowed to do so.

██████████ (“A Story” – poem)

You create a wonderfully strong, generous, and life-affirming picture of your cadaver. I loved the image of this woman in death raising her arms like a lover, like a mother, to welcome the naïve and fearful students who have come to learn from her body. It was very comforting to read and – I imagine – to write.

██████████ (“A Sound Within” – poem)

This poem boldly explores the potential intimacy between cadaver and student. Students often see the end of the cadaver’s life as the beginning of their own journey into medicine, but your poem frames the encounter as very much a joint pilgrimage. It is typical to deal with suffering and death through detachment and withdrawal. But when you do so, as you rightly intuit, you lose your opportunity to “dance among the stars.”

██████████ (“Please!” – poem)

You found a good, consistent voice for this poem. I can really see this guy – a rough and tough smoker who isn't above a little profanity, a no-nonsense, down-to-earth straight shooter who wants the same in return. I hope his encouragement helped!