



Volume 17  
Issue 1  
2023

## Hunger

*Hollis Roth*

You regale me  
with stories  
of meals past  
seared scallops  
fresh snap peas from your garden  
— not the peas of my youth  
which I shamefully admit  
I still cannot tolerate —  
more and more your mind wanders  
outside the confines of these walls  
remember that last  
chicken masala?  
you don't trust them anymore  
those ghost flavours on your tongue  
taunting you  
almost bruising your wanting taste buds  
You would rather  
mine the pure pleasures of food  
as you perch on the edge  
of your hospital bed  
than acknowledge the tube  
in your nose  
and your rising lipase levels  
You're afraid to eat now  
so instead  
you ask me to indulge  
in some steak salad  
and wine  
and report back  
tomorrow

## **About the Poet**

**Hollis Roth** is a palliative care physician, graduate student, and writer. She uses narrative medicine and poetry to explore themes of grief, loss, and hope. Hollis lives in Lethbridge, Alberta, with her two beloved cats Iggy and Roy. Email: [hollis.roth@dfm.queensu.ca](mailto:hollis.roth@dfm.queensu.ca)