



Volume 17
Issue 2
2023

Faceless

Kayla Ashley Simms

On the 3rd floor, a faceless stranger:

How is your pain today?

Behind the curtain,
a face I never see.
Nor do we exchange names,
not once.
For names matter
only to those who arrive
 with trays,
 bedpans,
 12 o'clock pills,
 and shifts,
endlessly changing.

Faceless, they answer their own question:

Today's been a good day for me.

I know that means
they will soon depart,
from this place.

How old are you?

Behind my curtain,
I wonder if my voice

gives any clue
as to the colour of my skin
or to the depth of my incision.

I look down upon it,
peeling at the fraying bandage
suddenly, exposed.

Digressing, they continue
with a portrayal
of the friends they long for
and the one who never visits.

Are you still there?

Faceless, I wonder if they believe
I have actually gone from this place.

Bewildered, I close my eyes;
certain I never will.

About the Poet

Kayla Ashley Simms is a psychiatrist and lecturer at Queensway Carleton Hospital and University of Ottawa. Email: ksimms@uottawa.ca