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## Hope In Spite Of

*Austin Lam*

They say your  
Liver  
Damaged and impaired  
You ask, “Like me?”

Whispered in your mind’s eye  
Vivid imaginings of  
Dancing in a forest of  
Overgrown roses

Bleeding with every turn  
Dance, Dance, Dance!  
They yell, they yell, they yell  
You comply, hugged by prickled arms

Screams and shouts  
Whistling in the wind  
Waves inside the cranium  
“What six months?” You ask

Would the *officium mori* be preferable  
You ask, to no one  
Living with one disease  
To be afflicted by another

It was never just you  
Help offered and taken away

Siphoning the devil's concoction  
Sweet and bitter aroma, crawling through your skin

Medusa's face, rearing herself  
Turning you to stone.  
Forest of Gulliverian  
Height roses

Sweet to scent  
Salt-metal taste to mouth  
With blood drawn from your  
Twirling body.

Confused beauty in  
Miasma of death  
Emanating from  
Cavity caressed by booze

Do you dare see  
Escape out of this forest!  
What hope? What reason to live?  
Depends on the liver. Said James.

### **About the Poet**

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