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I Am Here for Doctor Heller

Mary E. Cronin

Teenage girl, 1978

We scrambled up the tallest hill in the park
a blanket of snow had turned the city into an ice cream village
we threw our sleds down
the last thing I remember is hurtling into crystal whiteness
icy flakes peppered my face
squinting, laughing,
screaming

They say I hit a car
or did the car hit me
when I opened my eyes
I was blanketed in white
my head wrapped in cotton
my crushed hand stitched, splinted, encased
immobilized
I saw Doctor Heller's eyes
willing me to believe
I would be okay

I am here for Doctor Heller
because of him
I can braid my hair
swirl on eye shadow
thread a needle
count change
strike a match
I am fifteen now

It's been five years since I was brought here
a small broken girl
now I hear this hospital will close
they say it is small, broken
 is Doctor Heller here?
because of him
I can slip a dime into a pay phone
dial home
light a candle
snap my fingers
sign my name

 I am here for Doctor Heller
I want to put my hand in his
shake it firmly
look into his eyes
I want to say *thank you*
I am okay, Doctor Heller,
 I am okay

About the Author

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