

The Wolfâ??s Invasion of My Body through the Years

Description

The Auto Ethnographer

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Authorâ??s Memo

In 1995, I was diagnosed with systemic lupus erythematosus (SLE). The experience was extremely difficult and it took many years to write about it. The best way to share what I experienced was through my poetry. Within the context of the poem, I tried to explain what was happening to my body and what I was thinking throughout this period.

People who have Lupus go through so many challenges. We deal with the fact that our own immune system is attacking our organs and live our whole lives boosting it to keep ourselves healthy and away from germs and infections, and then find that it is responsible for our potential death. We also must deal with all of the things that can cause a Lupus flare; specifically the sun and stress.


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By Callie Gibson for Unsplash

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I sit in the waiting area of the dentistâ??s office facing the window,
watching a mother with three children as they play musical chairs
sliding in and out of a bright blue van adjusting themselves just right
for optimal safety, tears leaking from my eyes.

I slouch nervously in a doctorâ??s office chair awaiting an answer, looking at
my hands twisted, bloated, stinging, skin stretched painfully to its
limit, while nephrologist crusader in a lab coat snuggles
warm vials of my blood against his scrotum,
darts across the street filled with holiday emptiness to
get instantaneous results while my skin continues to expand.

I settle into a hard, plastic chair listening to unwanted results,
â??You have lupus,â?• the doctor tells me. â??Must begin Cytoxan,
probably wonâ??t have children.â?•
Tears become lava, spilling from fissured stone, my own
choices taken from me, I become that five year old
child stopped on the sidewalk, tricycle not allowed to go to forbidden streets.

**â??You have lupus,â?• the doctor tells me. â??Must begin Cytoxan,
probably wonâ??t have children.â?•**

I lie on a green, corduroy couch, six months a wife, six weeks a soldier at war
ambushed by antibodies, generals coordinating
land control operations within the vicinity of my hardened kidneys,
immediate mission requests allow assault fire
â??til military intervention is delivered via Cytoxan, Prednisone
herbal teas of nettle, red clover, dandelion root., Pau Dâ?? Arco, green tea.

I rise up in the slippery tub screaming, my hair grasping at fingers, follicles
excised from my head, wet towel falling toward the floor, fine strands
held hostage laughing at my distress, I knew this would happen,
the rigid belly, expanded waist, spherical face, dark circles under the eyes.
As the counterpuncher, I slip; fall through the frayed ropes bleeding.

Following a long line of boxer mishaps, my corner man flees the boxing ring.

I stand in front of the mirror in Vegas trying on dresses for a wedding,
gazing at my imperfect reflection hour after hour, my mind
rejects the image, this peculiar woman
clump of clay distorted; guinea pig lady screeches she has had enough.
My mom grabs my elbow, size 8 gown, steers me toward the front door
hands me off to my sister, melting into desert sunâ??s heat, spontaneous combustion.

Two years later my Lupus goes into remission, antibodies pack their bags,
jump on a United plane and hustle up to Australia
leaving me with a head of newly grown hair, Masters Degree
in Education, and time to evaluate the loss of an unborn child while
I survey a mother with children at the dentistâ??s office,
psychic tears stumbling down snowbanks, insufficient to soften the pain, lost souls fade.

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Credits

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Featured Image by Carolina Heza for Unsplash

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