



POETRY | FALL 2022

## **An Aside: Personal Statement Soliloquies**

By F. Lee Mueller

As I sit down to write how  
The brain is my favorite organ  
I am finding that  
I have uterus on the brain.

I am as sure that I will be labeled  
Hysterical  
As the white, male physicians of the 1900s were  
When they diagnosed her with Hysteria:  
A wandering uterus,  
Her womb literally in the brain.

But my womb is firmly south  
Bolted up with an IUD  
*Thank God*, I think  
As my first friend has the first post-roe pregnancy scare  
And she asks me  
*Hey doc*,  
Do antibiotics really make birth control ineffective?

I also need some antibiotics  
Against the scourge of  
Men  
Quiet, unconcerned, forgetting that  
They too  
Benefit from abortion.

Actually, what I really need is  
To focus on the brain  
On my personal statement  
And residency applications  
But  
I'm about to become an aunt  
To a very wanted child.  
*Thank God*, I think  
She is almost full term.  
And  
I'm newly engaged,

Talking dreamily about rosy-cheeked babes  
Late at night  
With my lover,  
Who will make the best stay-at-home parent  
*Thank God*, I think  
If they will let him.  
Will they let us?  
Will my body let us?

Female physician infertility  
Underrecognized  
On the rise  
While we still fight for our sisters  
To be able to choose  
Will anyone fight for our right to be  
Mothers?

How do I ask in an interview  
About parental leave  
About pumping at work  
Without being off-putting and  
Hysterical.

How do I write about my passion for the brain,  
For the minds and brilliance of women,  
Of my teachers and colleagues,  
When they are being  
Reduced to uteruses  
And I am crying  
On a curb  
In an Arby's parking lot  
In a small, small, southern town  
Alone,  
Me and my shiny new diamond ring  
And my scarred skull, my scared soul  
On June 24<sup>th</sup>.

Let it be as infamous as  
January 6<sup>th</sup>  
September 11<sup>th</sup>  
December 7<sup>th</sup>  
Because  
Just as many people will die and  
*We told you so*  
Back on January 21<sup>st</sup>  
In our pink pussy hats  
Our anger aimed at

The orange dude  
Our cries  
Apparently  
Echoing into  
A black hole.

The blood  
Bright white on my head CT  
All those years ago, and  
Bright red in our underwear  
Every month,  
If we're lucky.

So don't you dare call me  
Hysterical.

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**F. Lee Mueller is a fourth-year medical student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine. She previously received her B.S. in Biology and B.A. in Religious Studies from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She has enjoyed participating in SNMA sponsored book clubs on racial injustice in medicine, mentoring pre-med undergraduate students through her leadership of the Medical Mentors group, and ushering in future classes of medical students through her roles as an Admissions Ambassador, interviewer, TA, and Summer Seminar Instructor. She is pursuing a career in Neurology with interests in neurocritical care, neuroimmunology, and neuro-oncology.**

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