

The patients, sometimes, they die;  
we should get that out of the way.

More often though, they live, at least  
for the glimpse of time we share together,  
their hearts beat below our hands, they  
have the strength of a baby who will not let go.

We hold what they cannot, scan through data for an *Aha*, plan  
to cut into them like fruit. Though when they teeter,  
we fill with their pain, as if it were infinite, expanding,  
pouring in from a watering can. When we reach the  
end only they can determine, when we meet  
eventual defeat, let this not be a breeding ground for  
better doctors; rather my guide to be  
a better daughter, a better friend, to pledge  
my allegiance to one day let my mother go,  
to hold her hand and wipe her tears, to know what it means  
to have lived and loved in the many flavors we are  
privy to; to know loss that is vast and never satisfied;  
that those moments are made to savor, that we *are* each other's keeper,  
to have no reservations when it is time to go home and weep.

a b o u t • p o e t

## WIGGS

Alleigh Wiggs is a third-year medical student at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill School of Medicine. Alleigh is currently an Executive Editor for *Iris*, where she can share her passion for health and humanities with others. Her work has previously been featured in *Iris*, *The Health and Humanities Journal* of UNC-Chapel Hill, and *Carolina Muse Literary & Arts Magazine*. She is pursuing a career in general surgery.

See more of Alleigh's work on page 53.

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