
POETRY | FALL 2023

Newbie

By Elizabeth Osmond

After Caroline Bird

You thought you could cannulate a vein, but it turns out
you were just putting a key in a lock. And that wasn't a night
shift you worked, it was staying up til the wee hours at
Glastonbury festival. And that wasn't an electronic discharge
summary you typed, you were tapping out a bad version of
Rocket Man on the piano. What if you thought you could
prescribe an opiate but instead you had just written
a smutty note? And that ward round presentation where
you remembered *all* the signs and symptoms of systemic lupus?
A rambling story in the pub. You thought that you intubated
a difficult airway when in fact you applied your eyeliner
in a dark smudge with all the medical students looking on.
Then you put your laptop safely in the fridge
called the consultant "mum"
put a kiss at the end of the handover text
all the while nodding to yourself like
"yeah, this is how it's done"
while dropping the bleep down the toilet

Elizabeth Osmond is a UK-based consultant neonatologist and a poet. In 2021, she won third prize in the Hippocrates competition for poetry and medicine and her work has been published in medical and literary journals. She writes poetry as a form of reflective practice.

© 2023 *Intima: A Journal of Narrative Medicine*