

## Tell Me What You Know

By Tiffany Xie

“Tell me what you know about dismemberment.” — Bhanu Kapil

I don't remember her illness, or her name,  
only birdhouses beyond the window,  
spring still underground, and the blue sponge  
I dabbed on her lips as she was dying.

Now another body lies before me.  
I know her name and little else.  
How old she was, the cause of death.  
Chipped pink polish on each toenail.

The scalpel in my gloved hand  
unfolding sheets of muscle.  
My touch melting her fat  
into golden liquid.

I never cried, except once. I couldn't  
find her uterus. We picked at clumps  
until we realized they were tumors.  
How much they must have hurt.

I can't pretend to know these women.  
Our shared anatomy is all I know.

I know there is a delicate webbing of veins  
arching over my feet.

I know that the two cords behind my knee  
are twin tendons.

I know where to find a pulse  
in the pocket of a wrist.

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**Tiffany Xie (she/her) is a first-year medical student at the University of Chicago Pritzker School of Medicine. She grew up in Indiana and studied Biology and English at Indiana University.**