
POETRY | SPRING 2021

metastatic

By Nicholas Aldredge

she is twenty-five and
I am twenty-nine, tasked
to palliate her cancer. We're young
for such a grim mission.

I offer drugs to dull her
body's pain, to ease her anxious
nights as they spill
into days at the bedside,
but know her suffering
is not relieved.

so I sit and listen:

she wishes she were
at the beach, remembers
her family's house at the water's edge,
child's play in flax-gold sand and lapis tides

but where she finds beauty
I see only tidal treachery
beneath the waves, pulling her out,
this coastal house left empty
all too soon.

Nicholas Aldredge is a graduating fourth-year medical student at the University of Virginia and will be a resident physician in emergency medicine at the University of Washington in Seattle in 2021. He writes short stories and poems exploring the nature of illness and the patient-physician relationship and hopes his pieces encourage readers to engage in further dialogue about the complex themes of narrative medicine.

© 2021 *Intima: A Journal of Narrative Medicine*