
POETRY | SPRING 2021

April 17, 2018: A Brief History of Gynecological Surgery

By Katherine Panushka

The screams of my grandmother, my great aunts, forgotten sisters
are inscribed on the scars that they carried
“I am not a petri dish
yet I am the fertile ground
on which colonies grow.

I am the flesh
that ensured the steadiness of your knife
ask of your fathers

where would they be if
Sims and the men alike
could not cinch their knots

tight unto me.
You are here
because of me

in spite of me.
I am the forgotten flesh
the practice material

the worn wool
that wicks water
from the sweat of your brow

You may choose to
let the memory of the wails
slip through your fingers

but the scars will continue to build up
keloid on top of keloid
until they split and ooze

flowing with the voices and wails
of a past time that feels too familiar
They whisper in your ear

I am your mother
I am your mother
I am your mother.”

Katherine A. Panushka is a fourth-year medical student at the University of Utah School of Medicine. She has matched into an Obstetrics and Gynecology residency at Montefiore Medical Center – Albert Einstein College of Medicine in the Bronx. She was born in Ogden, UT. She received her B.A. in English Literature at Westminster College in Salt Lake City. She is inspired by the complex and often intimate stories that bring patients into her care. These stories motivate her to advocate for reproductive justice, health equity, and comprehensive healthcare. Her poetry has been published in the University of Utah’s fourth-year medical student publication, *Voices from the Wards*, and the peer-reviewed online publication, *Mosaic in Medicine*.

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