

POETRY | FALL 2022

In the 70's

By Nancy Smith

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In the 70's, we counted microdrips of Lidocaine to control the premature looping of electricity. The heart is patient the seizures are rare we are trying our best.
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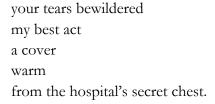
Before the microchip calculated it,
we unfurled the formulae.
Cardiac Index, SVO2
Big A to little a
ratio
grades of oxygen consumption
the number production
bangles and clicking heels of an ICU
nurse.

Later, many survived the witnessed arrest so well without the looping perseveration.

Cold, rubbery armor so simple ICU freeze in your place till your heart catches up.

Later still, the acid of time releases so much.

I see you your head is full of birds your skin gelid alabaster



Nancy Smith is a retired registered nurse, who moved through many of the venues of hospital nursing, but who worked mostly in an Intensive Care Unit. Smith found herself searching for the poetic voice when she, her patients and co-workers were gathered together during times of pressure, something we call stress. Poetic imagining seemed to expand the space for her. Smith and her family live in rural Maryland, where she has designed an acupuncture practice.