

FROM THE INSIDE

A letter to my doctors

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A letter to my doctors¹

I was born premature, 4 months early.

You intubated me,
put me on a ventilator,
because You could.

My lungs were weak.
You gave me surfactant
and waited for them to grow,
because You could.

My lungs grew, but not enough,
You gave me a tracheostomy
and a portable ventilator,
because You could

My head was getting bigger,
“excess fluid build-up” the nurse said.
You put a shunt in,
because You could.

My swallow was unsafe,
“an aspiration risk”.
You gave me a gastrostomy,
because You could.

My lungs got worse,
You started me on steroids,
“a dose for a horse”,
because You could.

My shunt got infected,
I started to seize.
You tried to stop me.
You thought You could.

It went on for days
My parents said STOP.
The last straw.
They finally could.
Lo and behold,
To have never gone home,
To my room,
To my bed,
To my dog.

If You had known what my future held,
Would you listen to me on day one?
Would You stop?
Would You listen to me if I could talk?
Or would You do it all again
because I couldn't?

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Declarations

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¹ Dedicated to those children for which we have erred on the side of aggressive intervention. To the children we could not save. To those that have taught us that just because we can, it does not necessarily mean that we should. This cross is the heaviest that we bear, we are sorry.