



The Love Song of the Pimped Student

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Artist's Statement

Poetry allows both readers and writers entrance into either imaginary or alternate realities that are at one time concordant and discordant with lived experience. Regarding the past, poetry provides a medium for the writer to regain locus of control by historically revising an experience or event, or controlling the presentation by which one will interpret an experience or event. In such formats, poetry can provide therapeutic closure regardless of the historical veracity of the contents of the poem. The poem accompanying this statement was written during a clinical rotation in psychiatry where staff physicians encouraged readings in the humanities. The author was reading T.S. Eliot's *The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock* in between admissions, and discovered a language to describe both the atmosphere and the emotions he felt in the operating room on a busy surgical subspecialty service the previous month. This poem is an invitation to readers to write or read poetry and to engage in either personal or vicarious therapeutic interpretations of imaginary or alternate realities.

The Love Song of the Pimped Student

To the O.R., with the team,
Door after door spread across the corridor,
*Like a patient etherized upon a table;**
Let us go, to wash and rinse and dry our prints,
Behind the O.R. Prince
To sterilize and dry and stand in line
Given blue gowns by which we are defined:
Aseptic prints, gloved and ready for incisions
And numerous decisions
To lead me to an overwhelming question...
Oh, do not ask, "What is it?"
And here they come to make a visit.

In the O.R. the team comes and goes,
Constantly pimped on what they know.

And indeed there will be time
To wonder, "Should I ask?" and, "Should I ask?"
Time to remember pathology,
Procedures in surgical oncology,
(The team will say: "His knowledge is so thin!")
To the duodenum and pancreas, eight hours in,
Dissections, questions, sutures, and questions, I know
I cannot win –
(The team will say: "How his stamina is thin!")
Do I dare
Disturb the procedure?
In a minute there is time
For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse.

In the O.R. the team comes and goes,
Constantly pimped on what they know.

**Italics indicate passages from T.S. Eliot's The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock*

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