

3 poems for *The Listening Eye: Health Issue*

Kent State University

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### **Living With Cancer in My Bones**

I hope one day  
to feel peace in my bones  
like the five buddhas  
nestled on my terrain,  
who sport 108 beads and hold  
flowers plucked from my garden—  
an altar just for them  
nurtured  
as they nurture me  
when looking in their eyes.

I hope one day  
the health stars shine on me  
and a shooting one  
comes to greet me  
at my front door  
to honor my health dream,  
but who knows  
after living  
so many lifetimes,  
and having seen so much  
with many surprises and sparks.

I've repeated these wishes  
108 times yet nobody hears,  
will you?

## **A different types of hunger keeps me here**

It's a quiet May evening  
and we've just celebrated my birthday  
and Mother's Day— a merging  
that reminds me of my essence.  
I've drank too much bubbly  
and gifts no longer have their lasting effects.

A different type of hunger keeps me here  
and maybe it's the security  
of being loved that pulls me back in  
and the knowing that you  
helped find the mute voice in me  
all those six decades ago  
when I sat on the hilltop  
after our hike feeling completely  
empty and full at the same time.

There were no thoughts in my mind,  
but you in your wise way  
you uttered some into my heart,  
and for this I am eternally grateful  
that I get reborn each year in this month of May.

## **How to Break a Heart**

The day I was told I needed radiation,  
you sat with me and the doctor  
and asked technical questions,  
as I sat with my face pooled with tears  
as reality sunk into my psyche.

some actions we cannot explain  
can hurt us deep--  
you not noticing me,  
but more importantly wanting  
to expand your knowledge base

and then being told the first  
four weeks no fatigue  
and you saying I can drive myself,  
another smack of abandonment  
triggered from a childhood  
of maternal abandonment.

at home I lock myself in my room  
with a bottle of wine and box of tissues,  
as you told me I cry for stupid reasons,  
what it really is are reasons you don't understand.

some days it doesn't feel worth living  
and when I tell you that you say you need me,  
how many other ways can we break a heart?