



Play pricking

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I can't see her face from the other side of the mask.
There is too much white, ghastly white, plastic white, needle white, prickly white.
It's way past midnight and there are shadows of blood all over my hands.
No more.

A dash of purple, blue, and pink flashes before the skin can turn away from it all,
into some unrecorded form of nostalgia.
Time's artistic shutter. Recorded in skin, washed with ease.

Sister, let's go slow.
*These sores are nothing compared to the deep gashes within. Where do you
return to, when you have been there before and are disappointed to find it empty
again?*

She is no barbarian, but she goes on, prodding one last time. I am not much of a
saint, so I urge her, please explore. There is not much to lose, or gain. Not for
me.
Not for her either, I guess.

We hang on to our parts of the needle, two strangers playing their parts, for the
darkness is lonely and difficult to survive when you don't know what to do with
yourself on an endless night with hints of death.

Play on.

Poet's note: I wrote this poem in the hospital while recovering from COVID. It is always difficult for people to find my veins for inserting an IV and it turns into a theater of the absurd. This poem talks about that experience in the hope that it also reflects how, everyday, all of us are play pricking, trying to find the veins of our lives.

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