

# Medicine & the Muse

Writing | Symposium 2021

## **She needs no pity**

By Arokoruba Cheetham-West

And the glimmer in her eyes was lost,  
replaced by a vivid shadow of things gone before, by  
a striking reflection of the dark playgrounds in which she roamed, by  
the people she loved.  
An escape from a present devoid of meaning.

They say that she suffers dementia  
that she endures a scrambled molecular jigsaw.  
With this, she disagrees.

For these unraveled pieces,  
breaking away from their previous confinement,  
transport her back to the nights spent around the village fires, to  
the smells of countless treks down to the stream, to  
the laughter at half-formed jokes,  
shared amidst mouthfuls of sour fruit.  
She lives in these moments now.

Her children see her:  
frail,  
unhinged,  
shell-like.  
Her former self confined to the basement of their memories.

She sees them as they once were;  
unfettered by concern,  
rocking on the playground swings  
under the trees where she watched them grow.

She peeks at them now,  
momentarily parting the tangles\*  
blocking the portal  
that she invites them to enter  
to be transported with her  
to once again experience bliss.

\*Neurofibrillary tangles are primary biomarkers of Alzheimer's disease.

# Medicine & the Muse

**Arokoruba is a first-year medical student from Nigeria. Arokoruba loves fiction writing, neuroscience, and the medical humanities, broadly.**