
POETRY | SPRING 2019

Body of Wisdom

By Lailah Dainin Shima

Her surgeon's
radical cystectomy notes
splayed on the table, she sees
what her body knew, sleeping

in a steep Trendelenburg tilt,
his deft hands carving
ports of entry,
insufflating her abdomen.

The robot assistant docked
between her legs,
its talons reaching in,

slicing serous scrim
of peritoneum,

open empty space

of Retzius, clip
quivering pedicles
and suspensory ligaments,

unmoor

and pluck
diseased organs
from her pelvis.

Her body a river
flows
clearing debris

yielding ease

spilling light.

With a bow to Karen Maezen Miller and her post-op haze-piercing words: *Your body is the body of wisdom.*

Lailah Dainin Shima lives and writes in Wisconsin, where she's a single mom of teenagers, an aspiring hospice chaplain, and a practitioner of Zen Buddhism. It also so happens that she has survived cancer, finding deeper healing every step of the way.

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