

---

POETRY | FALL 2020

## Breast Lump

By Michelle Dyer

I didn't know it'd  
look like a lima bean  
on the screen. It's the  
color of newspaper ash or  
late-afternoon monsoon,  
not green grape, not the  
orb of rainbow moss I've  
been imagining. The radiologist  
pokes and prods the needle inside  
me like an impatient chef. I know  
this language, the language of  
the silent sift and search. I float  
here supine, watching the screen  
like clouds, seeing knights on horses  
and elephants with umbrellas, anything  
but this lima bean lump. A globe of  
massed tissue, this electrical storm  
of hormones, these cells of me that  
should have died but didn't. He  
continues digging, looking for rare  
ruby jewels inside some hidden treasure  
chest, or perhaps the wire to defuse  
the bomb. One time a friend said she'd be an  
onion if she were a vegetable, and then asked  
me what I would be. We were in our mid-  
twenties, walking the rim of the Grand  
Canyon. *A beet*, I said. It tastes like earth,  
and it trickles purple rivers down your chin,  
and what is more childhood than tasting  
dirt and purple? *She's thirty*, the tech says  
to the doctor as if to remind him which  
drawer the spoons are in. The doctor nods  
at this, and in a flash, finishes up. I'm left  
alone to dress, wondering if the bat inside  
my breast will emerge from its cave or if  
I should give it a name.

---

**Michelle Dyer is a teacher and poet in Phoenix, Arizona. She earned a Bachelor's in Creative Writing from the University of New Mexico and a Master's in English Education from Arizona State University. A lifelong poet and writer, she was recently published in *Snapdragon: A Journal for Art and Healing*. Her enduring interests include psychology, therapy, spirituality, memory, learning, and how poetry informs, intersects with, and expands these disciplines. Her poem "Breast Lump" appears in the Fall 2020 *Intima*.**

---

© 2020 *Intima: A Journal of Narrative Medicine*