
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*.

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