
Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Phoebe MacAdams: Two Poems

Phoebe MacAdams · Wednesday, August 28th, 2019

The Week after Biopsy: November 20-25, 2013

More waiting;

I ask my unconscious for a dream.

paths:

First, the street where I grew up,

95th and Park in New York City.

Then, a lane along a hedge in the country,

in front of me a homeless man carrying a small dog;

he blocks my way.

There is a table with rolled bologna sandwiches,

but he does not stop;

another table, more sandwiches.

Is this a marathon?

He does stop, with his dog,

and I walk around him;

the way is clear.

I am on the path,

there is no obstruction,

there is still a dog,

sacred to Asclepius, the god of healing.

I think about faith

and on the Monday

before I leave for Thanksgiving in New York,

the lab calls: it is DCIS.

I have cancer.

More hours on the internet.

I decide not to tell my sons,

Ocean and Will, who live in New York;

no cancer discussion at Thanksgiving,
 no "Pass the cranberry sauce. I have cancer."
 I enjoy the city,
 in spite of my purple breast.

*

Last Preparations for Surgery: February 1, 2014

The weekend before surgery,
 I cook the twelve pound turkey I bought on sale at Thanksgiving:
 cornbread stuffing with mushrooms, nuts, raisins, onions, apples, wine.
 I make gravy and mashed potatoes.
 I make cream of broccoli soup and cream of cauliflower soup.
 At the grocery store I buy yoghurt, fruit, vegetables, English muffins,
 Tillamook's Marionberry Pie ice cream.
 I pick the available greens from my garden.
 I pay the bills and talk to my kids.
 I tell Ron where to find all the passwords in my life,
 "Just in case."
 "I won't need those," he says.
 It's my anesthesia phobia.
 Holly talks me through the surgery procedures to help my fears.
 To my fear of not waking up, she says, "That's ridiculous!"
 and her vehemence calms me right down.
 I eat nothing after dinner, sleep a little,
 wake up ready.

Both poems from the poet's collection *Every Bird Helps: A Cancer Journal*.

(Author photo by Alexis Rhone Fancher)

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