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## Ignorant

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***Ignorant***  
Vedika Nehra

Papa hurt his back shoveling old Mrs.Baker's snow,  
Two days he waited for the free clinic to see him,  
One week of rest the doctor cautioned him,  
"That's half the rent," Ma whispered into her dinner,  
Papa went work in the morning.

The television says Ma needs a mammogram,  
She does not listen,  
"But Ma the news lady says all women need one!"  
"I am not all women" is her only reply,  
Perhaps the television is wrong.

Our landlord Tony has AIDS and works hard not to remember,  
He drinks in the mornings,  
Unplugs his phone in the evenings,  
And never returns when a physician begins to care,  
A forced apathy guards every hello, good-bye, and fear.

Amanda across the hall had a baby, then a fever,  
Free vitamins and a thirty-dollar prescription they gave her,  
But to afford her child's formula, bottles and diapers,  
She purchases only noodles,  
And saves the prescription for later.

The school nurse tells my sister to eat better; the cafeteria heaps fries,  
The pediatrician scribbles overweight and hands my mother a brochure,  
But when peaches cost more than pasta,  
And playing in the park is a risk,  
Brochures remain paper, and words become hollowed advice.

So dear doctor-to-be,  
For the many that will enter your doors,  
I ask you to remember just this,  
Ignorance has layers,  
And never is one labeled bliss.