Reminder

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Cover Page Footnote
Artwork by Isidora Monteparo

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Reminder
By Gillian Hecht
I’m thinking about what this year has done to my humanity
I never saw myself as frigid or unfeeling before
Cerebral? Sure.
Thoughtful? Often.
yet here I sit, unsure of almost everything.
well, the illusion of safety.
When did I become afraid of the world?
When did my doubts, even in the face of almost-certainty, become so looming?
What happened to my humanity? To my will to fill my life with warmth and love?
I tell you I’m afraid I’ll never find it again. That my life will go on,
eternally cold and calculating and unbearably calm.
I tell you that I need you to give me certainty. It’s all I can comprehend right now.
But you don’t.
I ask you to see me for the ounce of humanity I have left - the tears I cannot stop crying -
yet you refuse.
If my last drop of humanity is unrecognizable, is it really still there?
If my last drop of humanity is a tear, why do I even want it anyways?
But I find myself clinging to the tears. Rubbing them into my cheeks. Letting them stream
into my mouth.
I feel them.
They remind me I am still feeling.
Humanity encased. In hiding.
waiting for unbounded sanctuary; absolutism;
trying to learn that absolute does not exist
trying to remember there’s beauty in chaos. in platitude, too.
Who will I be when all of this is done?

8pm
By Rebecca Nguyen

It was 8pm and this patient had a particularly difficult NG tube placement. He
couldn’t speak and was not happy about our efforts to place the feeding tube.
And then there was me. Scared. An accessory to the team at best. My job was to
hold down his arms because he kept trying to pull out the tube. A hand applying
pressure at the wrist met resistance and distress. I moved to hold his hand
instead and felt him relax. He squeezed my hand lightly and I rubbed my gloved
thumb over his.
I was there, connected with this man who was so afraid and so uncomforta-
ble, stuck in this alien place. I only offered another human hand to hold his.
Anyone could have done it, but someone needed to do it.
All of the chaos of the universe and clerkship scheduling had put me there to do
what any person could. Right then, this man did not need my skills, my story, or
any of the countless facts that I had burned into my brain. He just needed me,
as a person, to be with him. To be scared with him. To see him. It could have
been anyone, but it was me.