

SAMPLE POEMS FROM
impact statement
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Canada



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CONTENT NOTE

if you ever faced coercion or confinement instead of care

if ever defined and diminished by the state

if reading about violence: medical / carceral / psychiatric / administrative / eugenic / intimate / institutional / systemic

evokes: shame / grief / rage / regret

please take: care / space / risk / whatever you need
(I mean it)

if you ever forged: home / pleasure / hope for a future

from the ruins of textbook / ledger / occupation

from an archive in which you would not find your name

I am reaching for you

PATIENT RECORD

MEDICAL HISTORY:

youngest of the family, by flights and decades. never pregnant, might want to be. sleep as needed, or four hours daily. extra dopamine if the doctor will prescribe it. mother, mother's mother, and her mother before that—died young, by multiple causes. by melancholic mood. by flooded lung. by rivers exceeding their banks. by trading one colony for another. everyone has a story but no one talks.

DIAGNOSIS:

pills for nightmares, for pain. for rain in the joints, only partially metabolized. content warning: vocabulary consisting mainly of wounds and words for hunger. if letters of confirmation are required, then these: BPD, CPTSD, peeled tangerines in one long strip. leave an island city. leave the radio loud, all night. lineage littered with the impulses of investment and industry. fill the home with this and that, rocks, pinecones, dirty spoons. how we might give back what we took. the land, at least. how we scavenged, always seeking for *we* to signify something stable.

MONEY MODEL OF MADNESS

Care is not care until it is counted

Each filled bed, each head's turgid lake spilled
over the lip of a therapy hour

The renamed asylum hosts vaccine clinics, flower stands, jewellery-making classes

Over screens, a matrix of hands stringing beads onto stiff necklaces

Single-file lines suggest an intertwining structure
the accumulation of gestures

Sure, former patients polished the iron fences closing themselves in

Ten-foot boundary wall, double-bricked

The administrator calculates the relative cost
of warehouse and cure

The administrator exists to maximize return on investment

To shave down the distance between worker and surplus, between
revenue and body

Not to surrender a patient discharge form, nor a formal apology

It takes lifetimes to excise the locked ward from one's vocabulary

Each hallway lit like a microwave, sensation
of snowfall in the throat

Confinement takes place on a public-private continuum

All mothers take place on the other side of a latched door

POV: you're at the brain doctor's office again, confronted with a Feelings Wheel— please select between Disgust, Déjà Vu, Arousal, Apathy

The administrator's kink is productivity

Crushed velvet pillowcases, cardamom plum jam in little jars

Wrists bound to beds with lilac ribbons

Lobotomies tested on taxpayers in the lowest bracket

Across the live edge of a neighbouring alleyway, a mural cries *YOU'VE
CHANGED*