

GOODBYE SKY

Vilma Blenman¹
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You saw no sky for a month
or more from Room 604
where your bed faced the door
and the clean tiled floor
made cleaner each morning
by a woman singing gospel songs.
You saw the narrow hallway, a highway
for nurses and doctors hurrying by bringing
life-saving instruments and intent.
You watched the doorway where visitors
entered and exited after you said
goodbye knowing what you knew.
You asked me one day,
What's it like outside?
Today there's a Monet sky—all hues
of blue in watercolour texture,
I replied, gazing at the white walls.
You were as quiet as the tiny droplets
of hydromorphone travelling through
translucent tubes into your tired veins.
There's no pain. None at all.
You said this smiling. I nodded knowing
there's only the absence of simple options
like living and loving longer and saying
goodbye to the summer sky.

1. Vilma Blenman is a Jamaican-Canadian poet, a psychotherapist, and retired teacher who lives with her family in Pickering, Ontario.

WHEN BLACK FOLKS MOURN

Vilma Blenman
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they dance also
stretching arms
high to the sky
as music moves their feet
against the direction
that tears flow
for they know
sorrow so well, know
it has another tomorrow
but no forever,
that behind them stands
yesterday
so they dance today
draining dry
the cup
of grief
yet holding fast
to harnessed hope.