

Patient

written by Cassandra Myers for the H.E.A.L Project

You call me

“patient”

because patience is what’s expected of me

Living with chronic pain
my whole life is a waiting room

One year to see a specialist
Who is 6 hours behind schedule
for our 5 minute consultation

3 months for a CT Scan
At a clinic advertising same day
private scans for \$2000

46 hours in emergency,
begging for x-rays
only to be told I am

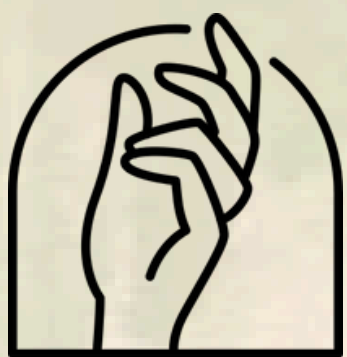
“a waste of resources”
by the resident

3 years scrolling through online forums
Reading horror stories
of botched medical appliances

Waiting for treatments available in the U.S
to drop in Canada
like the next I-phone

Watching my doctors compete
for clients on TikTok

Blurring the lines between care
and business with targeted ads



CASSANDRA
MYERS

Paying 300, 500, 700
dollars for consultations

because “non-essential”
medical professions lobbied
to be kept out of public healthcare

Fearing their profits would drop,
when it’s my friends dropping dead

The same year the government
makes cuts to health care,

They legalize medically assisted death,
now my friends have MAiD on speed dial

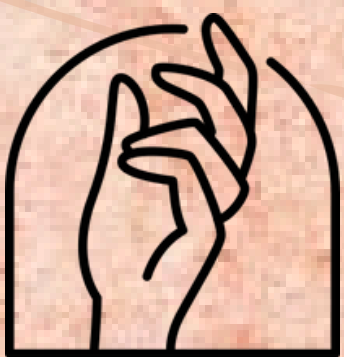
But don’t mention suicidality
or you will be an inpatient involuntarily

In the care roulette,
will I be a casualty or case study?

Ask the doctor who said I’ll look like
“an ape”
if he operates on me

Try keeping a job
when medical appointments are during business hours

Try working
when disability payments stop
when I start making more than a doctor’s
single day wage



Try affording treatment
if disability cheques are less than rent

Try choosing
between marrying your cross-border love
or keeping your benefits under your parent's care

People my age are saving for weddings,
mortgages
I'm saving for surgery

No matter how baggy my clothes
or bound my chest,

The doctor won't ask my pronouns before
diagnosing me:

woman

No cause
besides a life of shrinking myself into shadow

No cure
besides finding a good man to take care of a sick girl

My cane gives me more support
than any doctor or man ever has

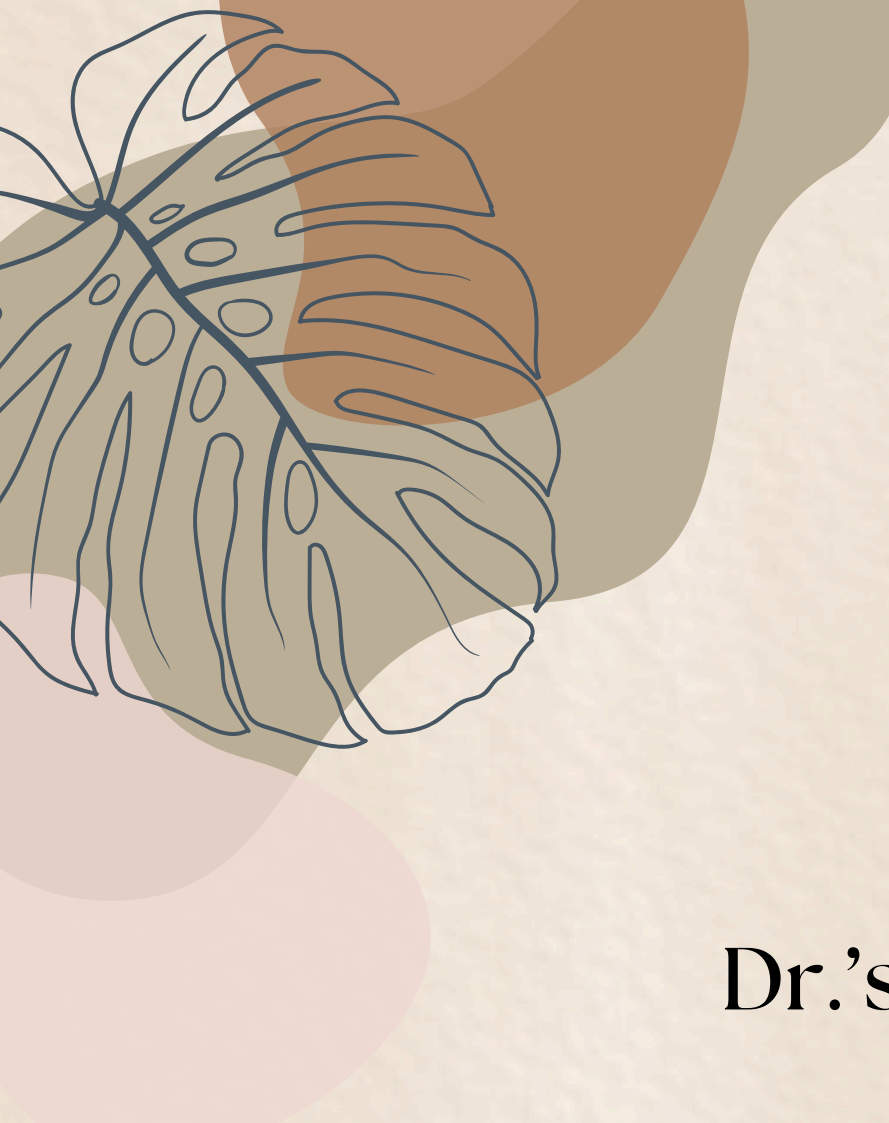
The same faces that colonized my country
make promises in their white coats,
they are here to help me

While the ones from my country
won't take me seriously
unless my father is in the room

Canadian doctors spend 20 hours total
studying pain

I spent my entire 20's studying how to talk to
doctors about pain





Dr.'s complain my pain is
“non-specific”

So I come to appointments covered in sharpie

Body like an operation board game,
they call me
“pushy”

Print my symptoms list,
a 10 page elegy,

they may glance,
but won't wear their glasses,

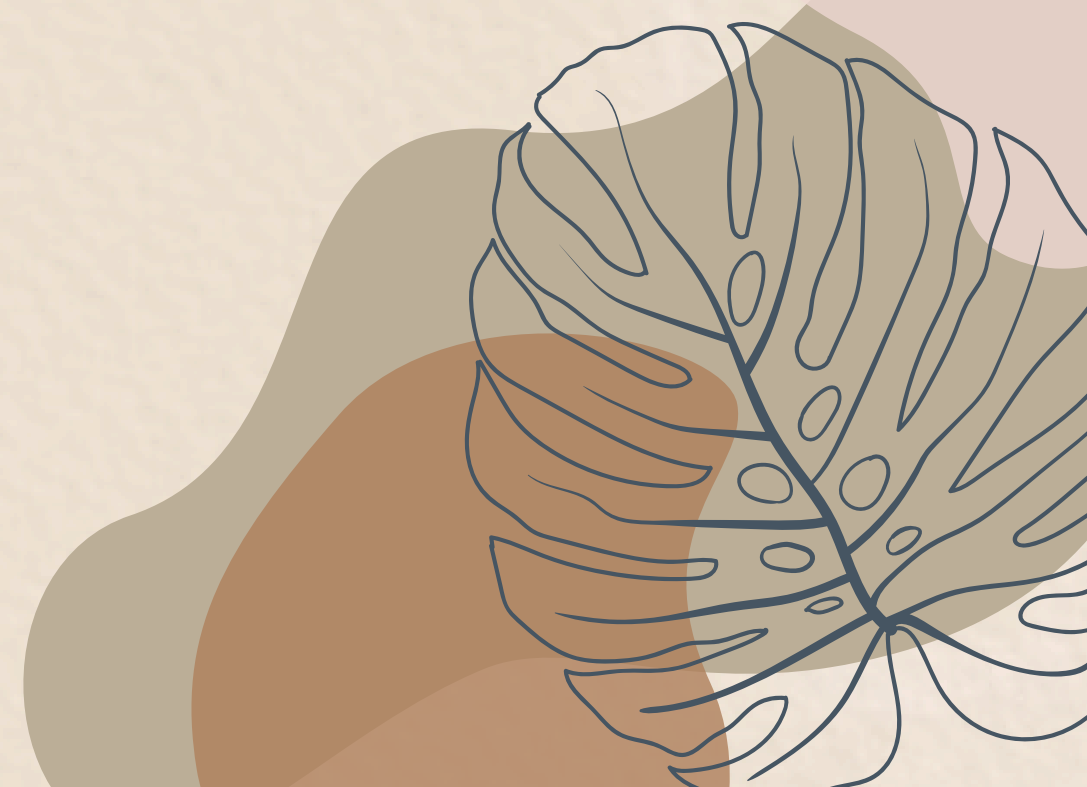
call me
“over-prepared”

“Have you forgotten who is the specialist on your body?”

Prescribe me anxiety

Tell my story like I'm reading my own eulogy
watch Doc's eye brows raise,
lips down-turn

“Have you considered... therapy?”



What a difficult girl, what a strange case
You're too young to be in pain
I can't even tell you to lose weight
Take some Tylenol
Try some yoga
Try smiling

Got the neurologist scratching his head
The rheumatologists pointing fingers

The neuro-ophthamologist telling me
“don't trust the vision therapist”

The dentist sending me to a postural specialist
The chiropractor warning
surgery as a last resort

But it's too late,

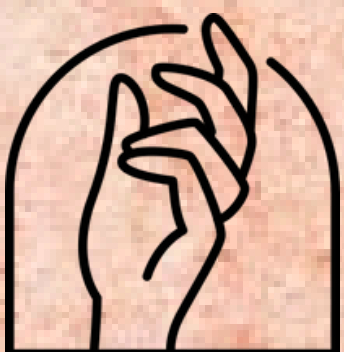
I've been butchered
by the knife that sliced the body
into parts to be studied

Do you know your own history, doctor?

Gynecology,
fathered by the torture of enslaved Black women

Radiology,
testing on Indigenous people nefariously

Immunology,
starving children in Residential School's to death



Psychology,
forcing electroshock therapy funded by the CIA

Obstetricians,
sterilizing migrants to ensure white supremacy

Using social workers and nurses as your clergy

In your holy trinity of
diagnosis, treatment, cure

The panopticonic institution
regulating the sick and disabled body

I take on the burden

of your broken
and barriered
and so called benevolent
system

just doing it's best

I am called patient
Because patience

is what's expected of me



National Collaborating Centre
for Indigenous Health



THE HEALTH ARTS
RESEARCH CENTRE



Are you feeling dysregulated doctor?

Your hands feeling tied?

Shifting in your blame throne thinking,
“Not me”

Who was your last *difficult* patient?
Did you take it personally?

Did you consider their story?
Did you loose your patience?

good

Now we have something in common



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