

Emergency Department Cubicle 2b

By Laura Webb

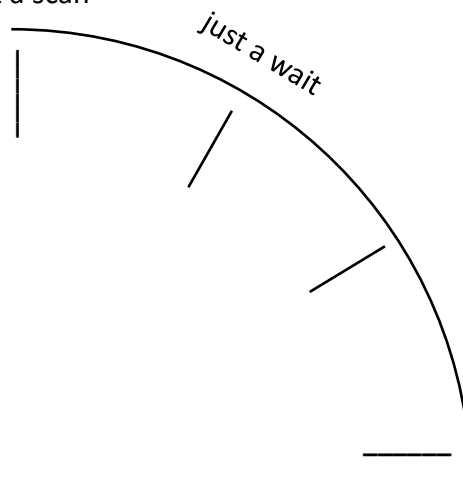
07:35

19 ♀

just a lump
 just a few lumps
 just a bit of lost weight

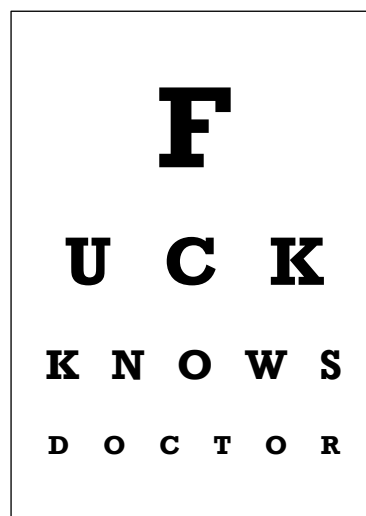
just a blood test

just a scan



10:40

72 ♂



14:10

19 ♀

the Big C

Cry

Cure

Calm

Can't

Cause

Clinics

Chemo

Cut hair

Call Mum

17:05

36 ♀

if it

has no

heartbeat

my tears will

fill a stony font

I shall baptise

my grief

18:10

54 ♂

the heart-----is weak-----their words-----reverb-----around-----

---my head-----tonight-----it's hard-----to sleep-----

it's hard-----to breathe-----I hear-----alarms-----

-----a crowd-----appears-----long words-----

the bed-----and all-----my thoughts-----go flat

-----long words-----white sky-----cold mask---

-----bed moves-----

-----red sign-----

20:45

36 ♀

its
fruitpip
heartbeat
small enough
to easily fit into
my single tear
of relief

Scientific Statement

Presented as pseudo-case notes, the poem tells the stories of several patients who occupy the same Emergency Department cubicle throughout a day. I explore their emotional experiences using poetic forms rooted in physiology. Sources of inspiration range from visible symptoms (blood drop/teardrop) to diagnostic tests (Snellen chart, heart monitor) and pathological processes (the cloning and mutation of cancer cells).

The Emergency Department seemed the perfect setting for the idea because it is a liminal, transient space which never sleeps, always in a state of flux – like the human body itself.