

**First Year:
A Gap**

[I]

Clear, cold day
Girl sitting on the corner
Pile of stained napkins
Bright red
Hand to her nose.

Maybe I should stop.
How long has it bled?
Previous episodes?
Hold continuous pressure.

Now I know a fancy word:
Epistaxis.
Not that I could help her anyway.

[II]

Pretty shoes on tall racks
Friendly clerk
Asks to help
Raspy voice
Tobacco scent seeping.

Maybe I should ask.
Onset of hoarseness?
Tobacco use history?
Get evaluated with a nasopharyngoscope
Within two weeks of onset of hoarseness.

Now I know a fancy sickness:
Pharyngeal squamous cell carcinoma.
Not that I could heal him anyway.

[III]

Sun shining in the park
Shifty hands
Make a deal
He crouches
To take the dose.

Maybe I could reach him.
How did you get here?
Can I help you break free?
Addiction is an illness.
Sobriety is a process.

Now I know a fancy name:
Serotonin-norepinephrine-dopamine reuptake inhibitor.
Not that I could save him anyway.

[IV]

The more I learn
The less I know.

I am trapped in a space where
Knowledge is invading my brain
But
Somewhere between the
 Knowing and
 Helping

There is a gap.

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