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The Unwelcome Visitor

by Sarah Marie Graye

He's tall and skinny, takes long, silent strides
For some people, he carries knives made of rib
For others, like me, he arrives quietly, without a hello
With a squeeze and a ripple, he pushes himself through

He's not the gust that whips up autumn leaves
Nor the icy blast that numbs my cheeks in winter
He's not the breeze that makes spring flowers dance
Nor the warm summer fug that sits on my shoulders

He's the extra breath of air that lives within me
Visits are sporadic, occasional, rarely every season
Growing slowly, I feel him press upon my pleura
Then grumbles and pops, announcing he's here

Occasionally, he'll close the door behind him
And leave me of his own accord

But other times the doctor needs to assist him

Leaving tiny incisions between ribs, like footprints

Where he'll walk again with long, silent strides

Sarah Marie Graye is a PhD candidate on the University of Kent's Contemporary Novel: Practice as Research programme. She suffers from idiopathic emphysema with focal collapse and fibrosis, and both her research and writing focus on illness narratives.

TWITTER FEED

We're proud to support a mini-conference March 26 & 29 as part of the Global Social Medicine Network initiative, with support from [@wellcometrust](https://twitter.com/wellcometrust) (<https://twitter.com/wellcometrust>). The event features social medicine scholars located in Africa, Asia, Europe, and the Americas. [https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/social-medicine-from-the-south-mini-conference-tickets-140640037137 ...](https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/social-medicine-from-the-south-mini-conference-tickets-140640037137...) (<https://t.co/655CiGWkhX>).

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