

'Poem – Life prescription: Prescribing life after death'

Krystal Koh

Stiff, cold, static

The pungent odour of formalin percolates the air

Mixed emotions of fear, uncertainty and anxiety prevail

Appreciating with great awe –

The complexity and design of the human body

There are times though

Looking closely at the faces, skin, hair, nails

– remnants of the external appearance of the living

Reminders of life that had existed

When my mind stops

Wondering –

What life, memories lay behind those sunken eyes?

How were those limbs, now atrophied, put to use?

Who were the loved ones that belonged to the ... once beating heart?

What ambitions did the once vibrant mind ... possess?

Alas as the weeks go by...

Feelings are numbed

Staring down at 3D replicas of our anatomy atlases

Ploughing through, poking, pulling structures

All in great eagerness to fulfil our practical objectives

Nevertheless –

Unspoken, silent

Yet powerful and strong in knowledge

We should never forget

The gifts endowed upon us from our silent mentors,

Our irreplaceable teachers of human anatomy

Reflecting silently –

Let us give colour to their colourless skin

Spirit and liveliness to the lifeless eyes

Warmth to the chilled

Voice to the voiceless

As our silent mentors continue their lives under our hands

Even beyond their own deaths

Let us, as future doctors

In remembrance and gratitude

Thus give to our silent mentors –

Our first prescription:

A prescription of life after death