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POETRY

## Sunlight / Dear Mum - by Graham Akhurst

ISLAND | ISSUE 159



Dr Bentley let me take you out today. *If you're careful not to overexert your poor mother.* We plodded along the C ward halls passing open doors to other people's sickness. It was slow going and we stopped often to untangle the drip line attached to wheels that spun with a mind of their own. We eventually caught the elevator from level three to the ground floor with a

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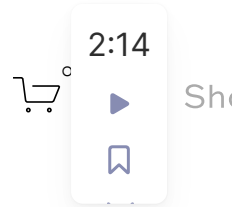


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fluorescent rooms. We sat down at a long wooden table, drank tea, and talked like we used to back home on the verandah in Nundah. I couldn't help but recall those fresh westerly breezes off the ocean and over the wetlands, the hum of steady traffic in the background, the flame tree in the front yard, and the humidity and heat wrapped around us like a warm wet blanket. At midday the sun was high and bright in the clear blue sky. You took off your slippers, socks, and beanie, and walked your frail body – with the hospital gown hanging loosely over you and the wheels of your drip machine rattling – onto the lawn. Blades of grass poked through your brown toes and your feet became the roots of an ancient tree. Warm light bathed your completely hairless head. Your back straightened and you stood tall. You looked up and a smile stretched like daybreak over your face, something that I had not seen in what felt like a long time. In that moment, I could tell the tall white pillar of the hospital and the grey city full of shadows disappeared ... ▼

**This poem appeared in *Island* 159 in 2020. [Order a print issue here.](#)**

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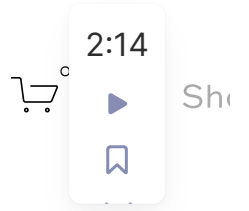
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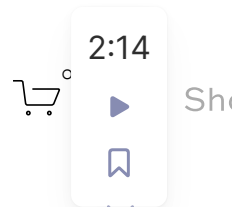
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Aboriginal people as the traditional and original owners and continuing custodians of this land.

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