



Writing | Symposium 2021

Given Space

By Ellie Beam

Button your white coat and step to the view.

Floors above multi-organ failures untold,
the incurable virus, and its strangling hold,

night casts the ashen city lightless
save for the moon poked clear through –
a scope for an all-seeing ophthalmologist.

Examine the planet, its people, both gaunt.

Oil barrel by barrel, cow slaughter by slaughter,
we multiplied on blind beyond the next daughter.

Scarcity taught little of what life was worth.
Now, on surge wards, you know depths of want –
in breathlessness, O₂; in hospice, the earth.

Flip apertures to see beyond visible light.

There may be a future if we are driven
to use well the space here that we are given.

Until the vaccine, we need words we can keep.
Speak with the force you have at your height:
six feet is the length of one giant leap.

– Elizabeth Beam

Ellie Beam is an MD/PhD student currently completing her clinical rotations. She is interested in the intersections of neuroscience, psychiatry, and the humanities.