

Subdural hematoma

Laura Grace Weldon

Neurology® 2018;90:855. doi:10.1212/WNL.0000000000005411

Thank you Dr. Gandhivarma Subramaniam

Squeezed into pain's tight grip,
my son finally agrees to an ER visit, where
images of his brain's convoluted architecture
show it pushed aside
by blood's gleaming fist.

Seated in waiting room furniture
thickly layered with other people's prayers,
we pass time knuckled, blank
while neurosurgeons saw open his skull.

I think of the girl who fell
10,000 feet from a broken plane
into Peru's jungle. Tightly clustered trees
cushioned her, their limbs breaking
to set her on the forest floor
still safely strapped in her seat.
Wearing white sandals,
a frilly dress
she walked along a stream 11 days
to find rescuers. At first, those men
feared she might be a river ghost.

I want to strap my own son in
so miraculous a seat.
Drop him in a current
where time rushes backward,
before a guy late for his shift
at a donut shop
makes an illegal left turn,
before my son's helmet hits the car,
before my son's body
skids down the pavement,
before vessels begin leaking
into the dear familiar head
I first glimpsed in the birthing room.

Benjamin wakes, blue eyes watery
against ghostly pale skin,
map of a dark river
etched deep across his forehead.
He turns to us, jesting
"No drain bramage!"
to let us know
he's out of the jungle.

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This information is current as of April 30, 2018

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