

Carcinoma, as Told by the Cells, with Lines from Lab Reports

Poetry by Laura Ruby

After torrin a. greathouse

Maybe I am what you say—*invasive, poorly
differentiated*. Maybe I need *imaging guidance,
imaging supervision*, where the *suspicious
is palpable*. What guidance
can you give? What language
is your touch?

The doctor's loose translation:
with all this *fat suppression,
fat saturation, the acoustic shadowing of rib structures
should not*

be delayed. Don't delay. Slip on the slip-on
gown, bare, white legs upholstered in gooseflesh, knees tick-
ticking off the minutes. Shiver.

Listen: I am my own Rosetta Stone.

Listen: I speak duct, organ, bone,
fluent where you are
dumb.

Listen: I enjoy looming so *large* in your
tiny mind, on your tiny screens: *complex, cystic, a mass
consistent with metastasis, vibrant*

*with gradient echo
and mild background enhancement.*

For all you know I have always been
*morphologically abnormal,
scattered cysts* like pearls spat
*against
the
chest
wall*, art titled "Landscape, with *Mammary Chain Involvement*."

But *spot views
of the skull*
won't show *increased radiotracer uptake*, not yet, and the *soft tissue*
still has some give
to give. *The uterus is not
enlarged, wave forms are normal*. Shouldn't you celebrate what and when
you can?

I am just a *small follicle*
rupture, unremarkable in the family history, or any history. I give birth to
myself and myself and myself.

Informed consent was not obtained, but I'd rather ask
forgiveness than permission.

Wouldn't you? Tell me
you love me, flesh of your flesh. The end
doesn't have to be lonely, doesn't have to be
bitter. Do what you will to survive and I promise
I'll do the same.