

"Yes ..."

But I didn't know. I didn't have a clue what to think. I decided to give up the history and end with the usual, last-resort question.

"Is there anything else I should know before I examine you?"

I had a complete neurological and cardiovascular exam on the menu for her.

"Well ... now that you're asking ... You see, I think I'm getting worse. I ... well, before I used to drop but it would go back in by itself. Now I have to push it back."

I sat there in silence. I must have looked like I'd seen a ghost, for after a moment she leaned over to me and asked, "Are you okay, dear?"

"Eh ... yes ... yes I'm fine ... Please excuse me for a second ..."

I got up and grabbed the chart that had been sitting on the desk the whole time. The first line after the personal information read as follows.

"Reason for referral: RECTAL PROLAPSE."

**Roya Etemad-Rezai**

Radiology resident  
University of Western Ontario  
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## Writing in migraine mode

Squatting on a rock, meditating, searching for a metaphor, a medicine for my migraine. I look up to the sky. Sun shards pierce my eye and trigger my muse. My migraine. Her thoughts swell my brain; her feelings flood my blood. As her anvil presses down on my right optic nerve, words squeeze and splat out of my eye onto the paper. Turds of clay.

She tightens my occiput, stretches my scalp inward, sideways and out again like a moustached fat lady in black chiffon and strong B.O., heaving as she moans, while rolling pizza dough, scraping pointing fingernails along my right earlobe, midwife coaching at that gaping hole.

She burns my neural pathways, slashes and burns through neurofibrillary tangles and webs. Forgotten pain lashes out of blazing woods and brews in the oceans of soup steaming in me.

I ride her vertiginous waves, up and down, through crest and trough, as plots climax then drop, over and over, my stomach turning inside out until I fear my head will pop from all this conflict and tension she creates.

When I cannot bear the aches she releases, I try pills, tinctures, balms and elixirs. She then recedes, painting landscapes blue and red; horn and fiddles dancing horas around my mother's bed; drunken dybbuks whispering ditties in my head.

Migraine, I would like to banish you forever!

But without your passion, hair falls limply onto the page, rootless without stories. How can I give up such fervour?

**Maureen Rappaport**

Family physician, Montreal, Que.

## All forgiveness

Confession of our faults is the next thing to innocence.

— Publius Syrus, maxim 1060

The art of confession has an illustrious history: think of St. Augustine and Rousseau. A fault admitted is more readily forgiven than a fault denied. And sometimes there's a good story in it. The Left Atrium welcomes short poems and prose submissions of up to 1000 words. Confide in us at [todkia@cma.ca](mailto:todkia@cma.ca)

## One thousand words



William James Topley / National Archives of Canada / PA-042919

Ottawa Blind Association, October 1917