

# MIND TO MIND

Creative writing that explores the abstract side of our profession and our lives

*Stephen T. Harvey, M.D., Editor*

## **This City**

Alexis Wolfe

USED to be my playground, I'd travel  
its underground veins in heels sharp as needles  
theatres were for musicals not surgical procedures  
holding hands on night buses, not bracing for injections

now I measure this city in hospital specimens  
their car parks, canteens and appointment letters  
Kings College Hospital—  
where they noticed the hole in your fetal heart

The Portland—  
where they gifted your stomach a feeding tube

St George's, Tooting—  
where they kindly descended your testes

Great Ormond Street—  
where they stuck electrodes to your tiny head  
where you swallow a breakfast of barium  
and I'm weighed down by the protective tabard

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where you fill the basement archives  
with X-rays of your scarred lungs, snapshots  
of clefts in your retinas, grainy video  
of your uncoordinated swallow

where you are documented in pages and pages  
of notes and letters in blue files and  
hand scribbled drawings, those ink smudged  
diagrams I pretend to understand

there would have been other kisses  
in this city, in clubs and wine bars,  
on rainy pavements beside red phone boxes  
but the only ones I remember now

are those I place on your unconscious  
forehead before the anaesthetist ushers  
me out through double doors in the hospitals  
of this city