

Broken

Mom was insistent:
Don't live this way. *Just fix it.*
Deep within me I cried, *I am not broken*
but nobody could hear.
Pressing a hand to my ear, I felt
the hardness of my hearing aid, nestled snugly
in its canal, smugly mocking:
fix it, fix it.

My ear was fixed quickly by steady hands
that brushed swiftly past the curtain of my membrane
and entered the domain of ossicles that had turned to
stone.

The scalpel spoke sharply
but scarred ossicles could not vibrate.
A titanium incus was set lovingly in its place
like the final piece of a puzzle,
Or the last block on a precarious tower of Jenga.

I woke up to a world where sirens blare
and people scream secrets into cell phones.
Everyone hears the nasty rumors whispered in lecture
halls,

But they leave school and suddenly they are deaf
to shouted pleas: "Can you spare a little change?"
that follow them on the walk to the subway.

This 20 decibel gift given to my ears
has opened my eyes. The world is less kind than I knew.
Honking cars and intermittent curses
set the beat for the 5 o'clock symphony
of clicking heels, trains that clatter across tracks and
into the station.

I listen to the sounds of the sad city I love
but never really knew,
And my gleaming incus pulses in time with my heart:
fix it, fix it.

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