

A voice unheard

Show empathy, they said to me
Let the patient know that you understand
Be the comfort and support they need

A list of symptoms
A 15-minute conversation
From this I know their inner struggle?

I've heard stories of a childhood
A voice lost and found and lost again
A cycle of forgetting

Three small words separate us
And somehow these words are an ocean
A diagnosis that spans a gulf of experience
Is it just another list of symptoms?

Tell me more, I am supposed to say
But the response is unintelligible
A caged voice speaks of nothing

They tell me to allow for silence
Years later you are no longer silent
The seizures done, your voice unlocked

But when you speak
I listen to the words
And hear that silence still

Despite the years
The ocean still exists
I look for ways to drain this sea of separation

Show empathy, they said to me
But how can I understand the sound of a silent
voice
Yearning to be free

—Matthew Robinson