

A well run dry

I'm sitting at my desk.
The email arrives.
The surge is here.
Leaders are tense—they need more.
Doctors. Nurses. Volunteers.
More of our planning filling them with strategic confidence I know they shouldn't have.
My energy.

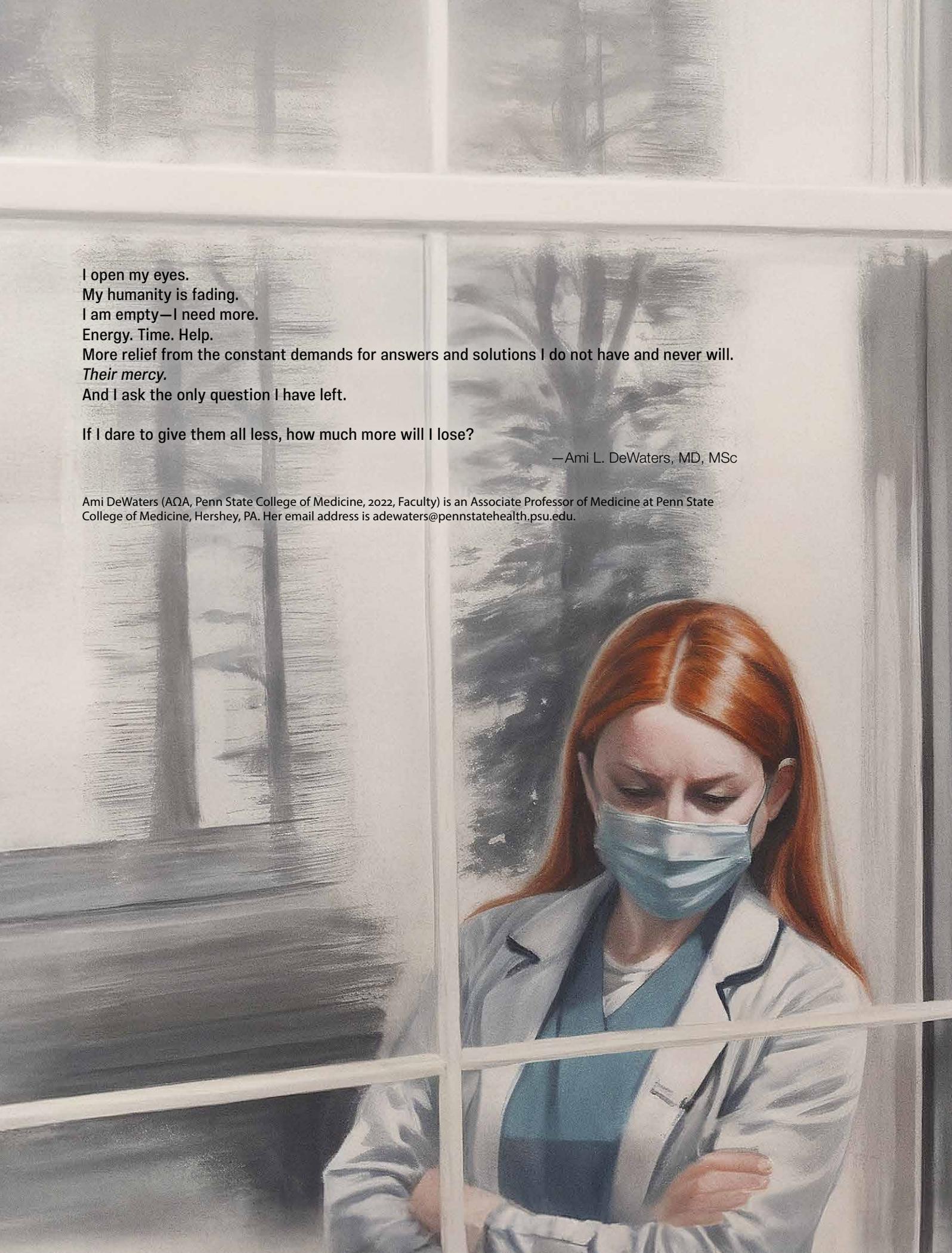
They have such faith in my supposedly limitless energy
They think I work 120-hour weeks for 5 months
Straight.
And never falter. Never tire. Never quit. Never
Wonder—*will I survive?*

I'm rushing to the town hall.
The meeting begins.
Education is suffering.
Learners are frustrated—they need more.
Clarity. Predictability. Opportunities.
More re-designed virtual classes that fill all the gaps giving them the education they deserve and paid for.
My time.

Time that ceased to exist months ago
As I forget the day of the week and month
Regularly.
Time that never slows. Never expands. Never stops
Asking—*what will you sacrifice to me next?*

I'm out on the floor.
The rounds continue.
Patient care is relentless.
Patients are terrified—they need more.
Evidence. Options. Relief.
More breath filling their lungs, giving them the peace of mind the pandemic has stolen.
My help.

And they know I can't help them
Because they know there are no definite
Treatments.
We both pretend that we will never give up. Never
Surrender. Never confess out loud
—*"I don't know if I will ever be able to help you."*



I open my eyes.
My humanity is fading.
I am empty—I need more.
Energy. Time. Help.
More relief from the constant demands for answers and solutions I do not have and never will.
Their mercy.
And I ask the only question I have left.

If I dare to give them all less, how much more will I lose?

—Ami L. DeWaters, MD, MSc

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