

YOU SEE

A reckless teen,
Irresponsible child old enough
To know better.

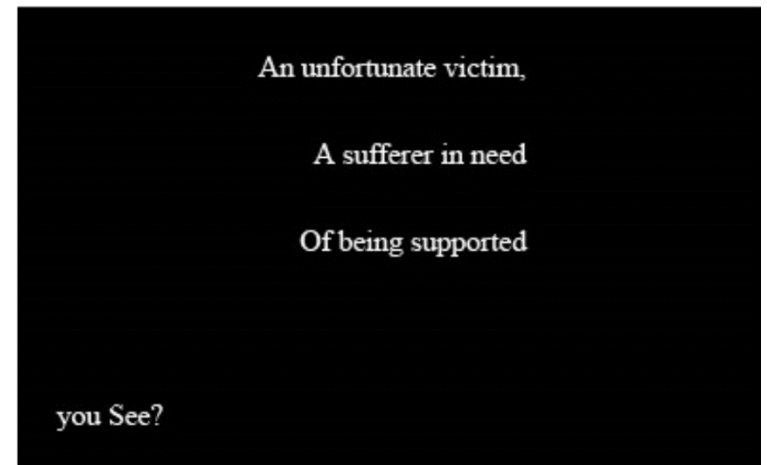
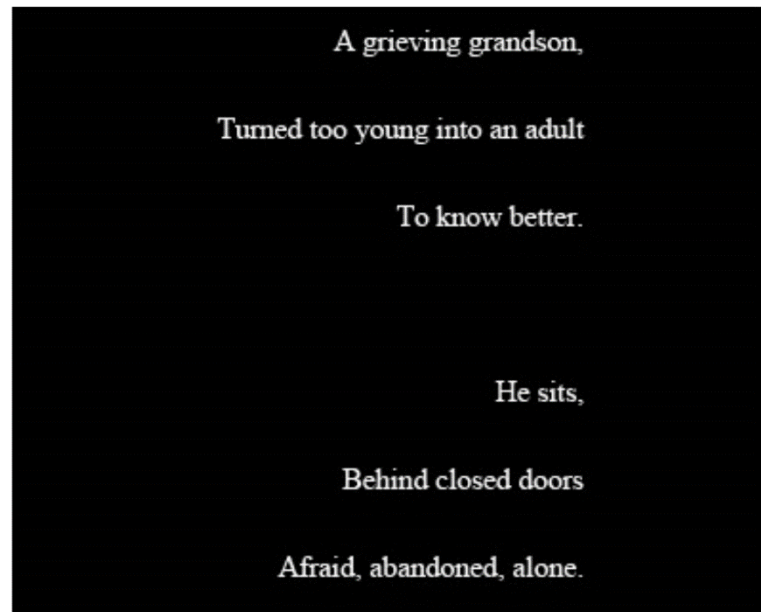
He sits,
Behind closed doors
Callous, curt, clumsy.

When his body hits the floor with a *thud*,

You see

An unconscious patient,
A nuisance in need
Of being propped up.

but do



“You See” was inspired by the December M&M event, specifically Eva’s story about a teenage patient she worked with while on rotations. She spoke about how she didn’t realize the extent of need her patient was experiencing until he fainted in the middle of the exam room as she was leaving. The patient was in the office for what she called “a classic STD presentation” – the diagnosis was quickly made, and the appropriate shots prescribed. However, what Eva thought was a fast visit turned out to reveal a tragic backstory. After receiving his shot, the patient passed out, causing the staff to discover that he was also suffering from malnutrition. Having lost his parents recently, he was now the new caretaker of his elderly grandmother; as a result, he had dropped out of high school to work in the fast food industry and was under incredible stress. This poem seeks to use the juxtaposition of white and black to show what may seem obvious in the light and how physicians may impose judgement unfairly based on these observations, contrasting the true story hidden in the shadows. Parallels in lines were made deliberately to show how one presentation may actually represent a different scenario (ie. “closed doors” refers to both the physical doors of the room as well as the teenager’s mental guard). Overall, the poem seeks to remind physicians to see beyond their biases, placing an emphasis on “See” rather than “You.” Note that the left stanza ends in a period while the right doesn’t – only when considering the possibility of the scenario in the shadows can one truly see their patient.