

## DEVON BALWIT

### False Friends

*The patrolman got behind the Essex and pushed it over the embankment  
and the cow stumbled up and galloped across the field and into the woods.*

— *Wise Blood*, Flannery O'Connor

Sometimes those supposed to help you, don't.

They stick in instruments, waggle them,

write on your chart without a word. If you ask,

they say it's too soon to tell. You hear

your name whispered in the hall, but can't make out

the rest. Your morphine drip

is just glucose. Even the call button hides your need

from those who might rescue you.

You were taught to respect people in uniform, but they

have proven false.

The approaching footsteps aren't friendly. There's menace

in their linoleum tattoo.

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**DEVON BALWIT** is a poet and educator from Portland, Oregon. Some of the homes her poems have found are: *Lalitamba*, *The Cape Rock*, *The Prick of the Spindle*, *The Sow's Ear Poetry Review*, and *Timberline Review*.