Palliative and Supportive Care

cambridge.org/pax

The hall between

Miguel Julião, M.D., M.SC., PH.D.

Equipa Comunitária de Suporte em Cuidados Paliativos de Sintra, 2635-364 Rio de Mouro, Sintra, Portugal

Poetry

Cite this article: Julião M (2021). The hall between. *Palliative and Supportive Care* **19**, 264. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1478951520001443

Received: 23 November 2020
Revised: 9 December 2020
Accepted: 27 December 2020

Author for correspondence:
Miguel Julião, Equipa Comunitária de Suporte em Cuidados Paliativos de Sintra, 2635-364 Rio de Mouro, Sintra, Portugal.
E-mail: migueljuliao@gmail.com

[On Saturday, the world kept spinning around and I felt it so profoundly]
[And even when you lost your daughter, mother,
it kept spinning and spinning around]
[And in the sky, swallows flying and singing at my arrival]
[On Saturday afternoon I saw you climb and descend, mother]
[And you taught me everything about death directly to my flesh, my tears and without theory]
I wished the world to stop its merciless movement as I stand in *the hall between* two bedrooms.
The door on the left … open to your dying daughter, staring at the void, at the flying birds only she can see.
The door on the right … a shrine where you sit, pray and wait to ask me for the (im)possible, *mother*.
In *the hall between* there is a woman's statue; we meet, and you listen …
You are the *denying mother*, in *the hall between*.
In the left room, your daughter breathes no more, *mother*.
"*She breathes no more.*"
And you become all the beasts in nature losing their cubs, *angry mother*.
You punch hard on my chest,
with your mother's empty hands,
as if you were resuscitating her in my body *[but no punch will bring her back to life, mother]*.
"*You give her life and save her.*"
Offering me God and all saints and richness,
you bargain, mother, in the middle of screaming and fighting nature, in *the hall between*.
You punch my heart as a final redoubt and leave ghostly to the room next door
of *the empty hall between*.
I can hear your silent prayers moulting your husband's lullabies while I diagnose your daughter's absence.
In *the hall between* you thank me for saving her …
"*She is breathing so calmly now …*"
"*I could not save her from her death. She is dead, mother.*"
And you cry and curse me. You punch my soul with all your tears, *crying mother*.
In *the hall between*, I have seen you happen between life and death, *mother*.
And I pray to offer you *acceptance [but that calls for time to happen]*
[On Saturday, the world kept spinning around and I felt it so profoundly in my body and soul]
[Please forgive me, mother, for the flying and singing swallows]
[Please forgive me, mother, for the heaviness of your daughter´s death in the hall between]

© The Author(s), 2021. Published by Cambridge University Press

CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS