



Being, Belonging, Becoming

Of wounds, hunger, and vultures

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Received: 12-SEP-2026

Accepted: 15-SEP-2026

Published Online: 28-SEP-2026

Context: These poems have been created using the words of past and present learners from the health professions in India who have ever experienced othering during their training, and who have volunteered to talk about it. **Click here** to read the editorial about the project. Alternatively, you may right click over the hyperlinked text, copy the link, and paste it in a browser of your choice.

Uninvited

As I reached the doors the watchman stopped me.

This lift isn't for patients.

I was the invited speaker.
A doc with a disability.

Is it the way I look?
The way I talk?
The way I walk?

*Not all people with disabilities are patients.
Some wear a stethoscope.
Some are not the wounded,
but watchmen for the wounded.*

A watchman for the wounded . . .
I cry myself to sleep again.

Cite this article as: Strakova LJ. Of wounds, hunger, and vultures. RHIME. 2026;13:65-66.

Hunger games

I am hurrying down the street
to cook dinner with a dose of organic chemistry
when someone decides I should know how they see me.
I don't ask, but they tell me anyway.

I must look starved.

I smile like I didn't hear. I choose discipline. I choose focus.
I ignore the bullies because I cannot change them.

Vultures

When I joined the medical profession,
my relatives made it a point:

doctors earn loads of money from patients

They had their opinions,
but never asked mine.

Acknowledgment: without the authentic contributions made by the respondents, it would not have been possible to create poems on othering that illustrate such a wide spectrum of issues.