

**Bourne**  
**toWrite...**  
creative writing  
workshops

## Medical History

by Lauren Holstein

My hair has quickly discarded pigment over the last year. Salt and pepper. More like salt and dead leaves. That witchy look that is still unacceptable for women. Full grey is sexy now – solid colour-blocked control – intentional, ironical ageing – that’s not what this is.

Heart disease on one side, plastic surgery on the other.

inherited Shnoz from both sides (may it live on).

Inherited fight-or-flight, genocide survival, cassock rapings, and the belief that I am special/chosen/victim.

Resistant to inherited faith in American capitalism as saviour and friend to our people.

inherited desire to cook too much food and feed people when they are sad. Especially when death.

Inherited green eyes, sunflowers floating in the ocean. (These eyes see everything.

Inherited from the plastic-surgery side.)

Resistant to inherited faith in the medical profession and the omniscience of medical doctors.

Resistant to the knife. The tube. The needle. The camera. Scalpel, injection, radioactive spaceships that see my insides, pharmaceutical concoctions. Bodily interventions. Alien invasions.

Currently (conflictually) taking a cocktail of sedatives and sleeping pills to quiet my brain, in desperate hope for some ounce of sleep. When I will probably die.

Zopiclone Lorazepam Amitryptaline Fluoxetine Gabapentin Colchicine Propranolol Prednisone Diltiazem. A year of my life.

MRI this and CT Scan that and Ultrasound that whole region and stick this device to your chest for a few days. Smile. Repeat.

Innate – but not inherited – proclivity for water. Ocean Healer.

Several tattoos, more on the way. This is a needle I like. Picture Maker.

The waves on my feet bring me home, where the salt water licks my scars and carries my sandbagged legs away. Pain dissipates like sand. Blood currents return upward to the heart, rather than stagnating in swollen pools. Eight scars mark the lines where scalpel split tail fin in two.

20 years, thus far, of a spectacular dance, knives in, like another literary mermaid.

And 1 year, thus far, of stumbling over dead tree trunks, gripped in fear, wondering where the dance has gone.

1 herniated disc

2 bulging discs

Chondromalacia

2 arthritic toes

2 crackling hips

1 PhD hump

1 broken wrist, age 12, soccer incident (tripped)

Various concussions (kicked myself in the head)

Torn intercostals

2 tibial stress fractures

Exertional compartment syndrome

Double fasciotomy

1 desire to walk off cliff edges

1 muscle biopsy

3 nerve blocks

IBS

Vivid dreams

Depression

CRPS

Various birth control pills and the aftermath

1 desire to swim out to the middle of the sea and stay there

1 broken nose

1 septoplasty

Lots of hands on my body

Camera down my throat

Finger up my butt

Duck bills up my vagina

Lots of sex

Lack of sex

No babies

2 STDs

1 desire to step into large bonfires and laugh with my arms over my head

1 36 year old uterus  
1 3000 year old amygdala  
6 new freckles  
4,741,632 extra heart beats  
1 extra tail  
2 missing toes  
3 extra ribs  
4 missing teeth  
5 extra chromosomes  
6 missing wings  
7 extra eyelashes  
8 missing tastebuds  
9 extra nerve ganglia  
10 missing children  
100 extra emotions  
1000 missing lymph nodes  
10,000 extra selves  
0 mistakes  
1,000,000 mistakes  
0 mistakes  
1,000,000 mistakes  
0 mistakes  
etc., etc., etc.