

# Broken

Mom was insistent:  
Don't live this way. *Just fix it.*  
Deep within me I cried, *I am not broken*  
but nobody could hear.  
Pressing a hand to my ear, I felt  
the hardness of my hearing aid, nestled snugly  
in its canal, smugly mocking:  
*fix it, fix it.*

My ear was fixed quickly by steady hands  
that brushed swiftly past the curtain of my membrane  
and entered the domain of ossicles that had turned to  
stone.

The scalpel spoke sharply  
but scarred ossicles could not vibrate.  
A titanium incus was set lovingly in its place  
like the final piece of a puzzle,  
Or the last block on a precarious tower of Jenga.

I woke up to a world where sirens blare  
and people scream secrets into cell phones.  
Everyone hears the nasty rumors whispered in lecture  
halls,

But they leave school and suddenly they are deaf  
to shouted pleas: "Can you spare a little change?"  
that follow them on the walk to the subway.

This 20 decibel gift given to my ears  
has opened my eyes. The world is less kind than I knew.  
Honking cars and intermittent curses  
set the beat for the 5 o'clock symphony  
of clicking heels, trains that clatter across tracks and  
into the station.

I listen to the sounds of the sad city I love  
but never really knew,  
And my gleaming incus pulses in time with my heart:  
*fix it, fix it.*

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