

# First code



Illustration by Claire Gilmore

They don't prepare you  
For the shock of  
How yielding the sternum is,  
Under the base of your palm,  
To the weight of your arms bearing down,  
Like a diving board  
Suspended in space  
Bowing on catching the diver.  
*Where are the ribs?*

They don't teach you  
Where to look  
On a body rudely laid bare  
For you to force blood  
Out of a heart gone still.  
So you look at the face

The deep brown eyes,  
Half-lidded and unseeing,  
Entreating them  
With each compression,  
*Wake up.*  
*Please wake up.*

They don't tell you  
About the lines and the needle caps and the plastic  
wraps  
Strewn about the floor,  
About the quiet that settles on a room,  
Deafening,  
Following the cacophony of a code,  
After the time is called.

— Sue Dong, MD