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‘Group’: Poem by Christopher Bu¹

Balint Society Essay Submission Entry 2020

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Group

13:57

Logging on, adjusting my camera. The anticipation of awaiting others.
This hour, each week, I meet with colleagues – but not as doctors, friends or
therapists. Not as individual listeners, but as a listening body together.
The resilience of the strongest, the compassion of the most sensitive.

I know my colleagues, and they know me too. But there is an undiscovered aspect
of ourselves, reserved for deep discourse and difficult conversations.

We may flirt at conceiving of ourselves as 'listeners',
But in Balint is where we find out.

Greetings and pleasantries, but something deeper approaches. A wealth of tacit
matter to stumble into. To forage its thickets, to hack through its thorny rows.
And who is it that ventures, in us? Fixer, Solver or Holder of the correct answer?
Perhaps, just a *stiller* facet of ourselves.

14:22

An urge to speak. An urge to offer. Scanning the faces of quiet expression as we
shift from presenter to audience, from individual to group.
What's that I suddenly notice? An urge to pause - Someone might speak at the
same time!
Or maybe no one speaks at all.

14:23

The DEAFENING ROAR of implosive silence.

Why does this unfamiliarity feel so familiar? Universal stillness – going unheard.

Omnipresent but shunned.

Tense posture, forward leaning. Crossed legs and furrowed brows.

My breath sits high up and shallow in my throat.

Thoughts in flight.

14:41

Group chatter now birthed as matter, but still ethereal in form. Ideas now slightly denser - almost in the realm of conceived things.

Worn, digested and metabolised – we now sit in our communal bathwater.

Ceremoniously we offer this back to our presenter.

Inhabiting all standpoints, all in one time? We glimpse at this very possibility.

Making tangible the unsaid, unheard and unclear relation of things.

Allowing this understanding to wash over us like a just-forgotten dream.

An urge to grasp at it.

15:00

This poem was written by Dr Christopher Bu, Psychiatry Core Trainee (Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust) - Undertaking Balint group virtually as part of psychotherapy training during the COVID-19 pandemic.