

## Dear Jonas

by [Donna Pucciani](#) in the [September 2022](#) issue

How clearly I remember  
the friend encased in metal,  
her head sticking out of the iron lung  
with row on row of other tubed children  
staring at the ceiling, wondering  
why their limbs were withering  
as they lay there inert, waiting  
for visitors or death.

I still know folks who recovered,  
limping a bit into adulthood  
or walking with a crutch  
that made me think they'd broken a leg  
on the ski slopes. Some have trouble  
swallowing, an echo of what happened  
years ago. And I remember how

the nuns lined us up in second grade,  
for the miracle-puncture, no scar,  
but a second's worth of pain. Nobody cried.  
Later, in adolescence, a sugar-cubed booster  
infused with a pink potion, handed out in  
a small white-paper cup, tasted of unripe  
strawberries, designed to keep us walking  
into the future.

Half a century later, I thought to thank you for this.  
But too late. Now, my knees wobble,  
hips are stiff from age as I traipse through the forest,  
stopping only to gaze at a deer with liquid eyes,  
or watch a blue heron standing on one leg  
at the edge of the lake, balanced, still.