



# Resistance, release

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I started writing poetry as an act of self care—a way to process overdose deaths of multiple patients whom I had cared for over the years. Many of my patients experience mental health challenges and are street entrenched and homeless; many are addicted to toxic fentanyl. This poem reveals the tension in one patient’s experience of seeking help for addiction.

## Alone

The pressure of his resistance  
pushed against the examination room walls.  
He was hearing my words  
but he wasn’t listening—

His story drowned mine.

Something in him shifted  
his eyes darted,  
he shrank in the chair  
and wept.

His sadness  
softened and calmed him.  
His cheeks and crown unburdened  
his arms folded loosely in his lap,  
release

## *Take your time*

His moist hazel eyes met mine  
and his heart stuttered:  
it’s so stressful  
alone  
isolated in my room  
being locked in the pandemic with my sadness  
all my creativity has got up and left  
I want off the stuff  
I’m tired of the addiction.

I listened to him,  
attended to his suffering  
alone.

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**Competing interests**  
None declared

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