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## Steroids and EpiPens

Sarah Elardo

*The College at Brockport*, [selar1@brockport.edu](mailto:selar1@brockport.edu)

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## *Steroids and EpiPens*

were quickly injected by the Muslim doctor  
Nissiem into the biggest  
muscle in my body; my bare, white,  
glute. “There had to have been a circular  
sticker on the glass” said the guilty nutritionist.  
He was innocent, and I, while sprawled  
out on the hospital bed, red bumps taking over  
my body, causing every hole and opening  
that connected my inner organs to the real world  
to swell shut, was a liar.

The purple onions, drizzled with warm oil  
sat in the grey serving platter behind the  
glass in the dining hall that Wednesday evening.  
Mixed in, the thick parmesan balls and the green  
beans in the dish looked surprisingly,  
edible. The rare commodity was too good to turn  
down for such an underprivileged stomach.

“Are there nuts in this?”  
“I don’t think so!”  
The server made a simple mistake.

After the first bite,  
the body was engulfed with the pricks of allergens as  
the walnuts squeezed every last bit of air out of the lungs.  
The oiled, purple onions that stuck to  
the green beans seemed safe as they  
all traveled down  
the esophagus smoothly,  
but after a few seconds I knew.

The server had made a simple mistake.  
She probably didn’t know that the platter  
had tree nuts in it,  
she probably just chose to tell a white  
lie. But at that moment, when she thought she could  
quickly get rid of me, instead, she watched me get pricked  
and jabbed with needles helplessly,  
as I desperately gasped for survival.

I listened to the nutritionist apologize  
for the missing sticker.  
This is *not* about the sticker, I said.  
This is not about the sticker at all.

By Sarah Elardo