

## **Nudity**

They take them off for me,  
one layer at a time  
until there is nothing left but their bare  
soul, mask finally removed in the safety of our work together.

For some, I stare, allowing them to feel seen perhaps for the first time.  
For others, I avert my eyes, treating their authenticity with longed-for respect.  
It breaks my heart to watch them as our time ticks down,  
putting layer after layer back on  
in preparation to again face the world.

I wonder sometimes if they realize  
their vulnerability makes me braver too,  
more able to lie bear for them,  
more able to be present for them  
in all the ways we both need from me.