

Prayer

By Philip G. Danufsky, MD

I saw her only once, and long ago.
 Strange that I see her still,
 Lying on the white sheet, wide-eyed.
 She does not shift her head when I come in.
 She seems so old, beyond her seven years,
 The body wasted, cheeks sunken,
 Thin skin tented, shining over bone.
 Only the belly is swollen.

I write the proper forms in futile detail,
 Recording ruthless progression of symptoms, of signs;
 Imposing irrevocable sentences on frail,
 Defenseless paper, in black, indelible lines.

Our Lord, our Father, You Who fashioned light
 To teach Your children how to see,
 And, to bind us each to each, created night,
 Why is this lost child given me?

A Father's Ritual

By Edmund Shaheen, MD

standing on tip toes
 my chin rests on the anvil shoulders
 of my teenage son

this son who once straddled *my* shoulders asks
 "Now what, Dad?"

we review again
 the lesson on
 tying the necktie

I watch
 our reflection
 as the sacred rite unfolds

like the cascading mirrors
 of the barber shop
 before and behind

I see my father's fathers
 and my son's sons
 looping the colored cloth

tying the yolk
 as he gets ready for work



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