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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