

Contents

Acknowledgments : xvii

Introduction : xix

The Body: Just Where Grace Resides

The Music *Philip Schultz* : 3

In That Year *Robin Behn* : 4

Well, Pain's Wildwood Looks Refined: *Alice Fulton* : 5

Dying Body *Thomas Whitbread* : 6

Sound and Shadow *Rosellen Brown* : 7

In the Land of the Body (#2) *Chana Bloch* : 8

Electrocardiogram *Cole Swensen* : 9

Seeing the Glory *Pattiann Rogers* : 10

How the Body in Motion Affects the Mind

Pattiann Rogers : 11

Pollen *Brendan Galvin* : 13

Beneath the Skin *Martha Collins* : 15

Confessions of a Hypochondriac *Edward Field* : 16

The Medical Environment:

The Hospital Smell Combs My Nostrils

Emergency Ward *Leonard Nathan* : 19

At the Doctor's *Robert Watson* : 20

Your Bed Is a Garden *Peter Klappert* : 21

The Urine Specimen *Ted Kooser* : 22

Blood Pressure *Sandra Gilbert* : 23

How I Became Fiction *Joyce Carol Oates* : 25

In the Hospital for Tests *Mona Van Duyn* : 27

In the Hospital *John Skoyles* : 30

In the Hospital *George Garrett* : 31

Visiting Hour *Norman MacCaig* : 32

The Hotel by the Lake *Cathy Song* : 34

- The Cure, an Anecdote *Mark Jarman* : 36
On Seeing an X-ray of My Head *David Wagoner* : 40
X-ray *Celia Gilbert* : 42
The AIDS Ward, U.S.C. Medical Center *Maurya Simon* : 43
Echocardiogram *Grace Schulman* : 45
A Question of Memory *Donald Finkel* : 47
Intensive Care *Naomi Shihab Nye* : 48
Two Hospital Poems *Conrad Hilberry* : 50
Convalescence *Stuart Dybek* : 51
Edgewater Hospital *Albert Goldbarth* : 52
Hospital View *Thomas Lux* : 53
Hunter Radiation Center: Halloween *Alice Mattison* : 54

Patients' Views of Illness:

The Darkness within Me Is Growing

- Diagnosis *Eamon Grennan* : 59
Here and There *Helene Davis* : 61
Cardiogram *Randy Blasing* : 62
Outlook *Philip Booth* : 63
Alzheimer's *David Ray* : 64
Fear of *Gray's Anatomy* *Brendan Galvin* : 66
The Condition *Marvin Bell* : 67
The Doctor of Starlight *Philip Levine* : 68
Bypass Surgery *Albert Cook* : 70
Tennis Elbow *Jim Hall* : 71
You Outlive All Your Diseases except One
Ruth Whitman : 73
Malignancies in Winter *Judith Hall* : 75
The Patient *Peter Meinke* : 77
Under the Incense Tree *Meena Alexander* : 78
The Leg *Karl Shapiro* : 80
Voyage *Lucien Stryk* : 82
Trouble *Dara Wier* : 85
In the Light of October *Emily Grosholz* : 87
The Teacup *Richard Solly* : 88
Harm *Carol Frost* : 89
I Need Help *Edward Hirsch* : 90

- Returning to the World *Laura Chester* : 92
 The Waves *Marcia Southwick* : 94
 Love for the Dog *Gerald Stern* : 95
 Stroke *Dave Smith* : 96
 Polio Epidemic 1953 *Maura Stanton* : 97
 You Again *Beth Bentley* : 99
 At the Y *Marianne Boruch* : 100
 Trendelenburg Position *M. Wyrebek* : 102

Views of Caregivers:

Gentleness and the Scalpel

- Limits of Imagination *Allison Joseph* : 105
 Before Going Back *Lawrence Joseph* : 107
 A Note on the Acquisition by American Medical Schools of
 Skeletons from India *Lola Haskins* : 109
 Older Brother *Julia Kasdorf* : 112
 Doctor *David Ignatow* : 113
 Putting Them Down *William Harrold* : 114
 Transplant *John Frederick Nims* : 116
 Orthopedic Surgery Ward *William Matthews* : 117
 Incurable *Robert Pack* : 118
 Vital Signs *Jim Elledge* : 120
 Monet Refuses the Operation *Lisel Mueller* : 121
 Nuns at Birth *Janet Burroway* : 123
 Vapor Salve *Robert Morgan* : 125
 The Doctor Rebuilds a Hand *Gary Young* : 126
 The Persistence of Memory, the Failure of Poetry
Robert Phillips : 127
 Domestic Life: Nurse and Poet *Stephen Corey* : 128
 "Bed Tablets" *Michael Benedikt* : 129
 Peau d'Orange *Marcia Lynch* : 130
 For a Teacher's Wife, Dying of Cancer
Richard Tillinghast : 131
 The Revenant *Peter Davison* : 132
 Doctors *Anne Sexton* : 133
 On the Subject of Doctors *James Tate* : 134
 One Too Many Mornings *David Rivard* : 135

Biopsy *Eve Shelnutt* : 137
Care Giver *Juliet S. Kono* : 138

By Health Care Workers:

Dissecting the Good Lines from the Bad

The Barking Dog *Cortney Davis* : 141
Visiting the Lightning Struck *Cortney Davis* : 143
Alabama *Jack Coulehan* : 144
Emergency Room *Howard B. Perer* : 145
Baby Random *Belle Waring* : 146
Night Watch *David Lanier* : 148
A Pause *Marc Straus* : 150
Questions and Answers *Marc Straus* : 151
Vita Brevis *Doris Vidaver* : 152
Magic *Louis Alper* : 153
Surgeon *Harold Quinn* : 154
Amnesia *John Stone* : 155
Getting to Sleep in New Jersey *John Stone* : 156
Chromatic *Stacy J. Keen* : 158
Driving Home from the Clinic *Judson Mitcham* : 159
Vermont Moment *Melvin Konner* : 160
Listening In *Melvin Konner* : 161
Epilogue *Samuel Stearns* : 162
The Son: Returning Home *Jon Mukand* : 163

Family and Friends: Afraid to Name This Dying

The Hospitals *Steven Cramer* : 169
The World Book *Steven Cramer* : 170
Father's Fall *Carole Simmons Oles* : 172
Simple Questions *Lloyd Schwartz* : 173
My Mother's Stroke *Kelly Cherry* : 179
Upon My Mother's Death *Rachel Hadas* : 180
The Selfishness of the Sick *Beth Joselow* : 182
Blue Baby *Judith Minty* : 183
Stroke *Susan Irene Rea* : 184
Fever Wit *Robert Morgan* : 185
The Glass *Sharon Olds* : 186

- The Moment of My Father's Death *Sharon Olds* : 188
 Last Elegy *Stephen Berg* : 190
 Cells *Phyllis Janowitz* : 192
 Heart Failures *Richard Howard* : 193
 Sugar *Barbara Anderson* : 195
 Talking to Grief *Denise Levertov* : 197
 Hearing with My Son *Stephen Corey* : 198
 The Return: Intensive Care *Sydney Lea* : 199
 Angina *James Dickey* : 203
 Intensive Care *Diane Ackerman* : 205
 For a Friend in the Hospital *Jeffrey Harrison* : 208
 Moonrise as Abstraction *Paul Mariani* : 209
 On Tuesdays They Open the Local Pool to the
 Stroke Victims *Robert Hedin* : 211
 Her Stroke *Jim Schley* : 212
 Nursing Home *Barry Spacks* : 214
 Let Me In *Judith Baumel* : 215
 The Night Grandma Died *Sandra Gilbert* : 216
 The Orchid *David Bottoms* : 217
 Counting *Judith Ortiz Cofer* : 218
 Now, before the End, I Think *Edwin Honig* : 219
 Frank Amos and the Way Things Work *Henry Taylor* : 220
 Parents Support Group *Dick Allen* : 223

Women: Flowers of Ether in My Hair

- Maternity *Toi Derricotte* : 227
 The Presentation *Toi Derricotte* : 228
 A Valediction in the Waiting Room *Debra Bruce* : 229
 Once in Ohio *Arthur Smith* : 231
 What Was Lost *Alicia Ostriker* : 232
 One More Time *Patricia Goedicke* : 234
 At the Gynecologist's *Linda Pastan* : 235
 Ann: Room 8, No. 2 Biopsy with Frozen Section
Kirk Maxey : 236
 A Story about the Body *Robert Hass* : 237
 Waiting for the Doctor *Colette Inez* : 238
 Pregnancy *Sandra McPherson* : 239

- A Day in March *Vern Rutsala* : 241
Soft Mask *Mary Karr* : 243
Written on Learning of Arrhythmia in the Unborn Child
Judith Skillman : 244
The Story of the Caul *Michael Waters* : 245
To a 14 Year Old Girl in Labor and Delivery
John Stone : 246
Giving Birth in Greek *Judith Hemschemeyer* : 247
Childbirth *Anne S. Perlman* : 249
Birth *Constance Urdang* : 250
Damage *Ellen Bryant Voigt* : 251
Seizure *Jeanne Murray Walker* : 252
The Choice *Molly Peacock* : 254
The Watch *Marge Piercy* : 255
Menstruation Rag *Diane Ackerman* : 256
Infertility *Stephen Dunn* : 257
Mother and Child *David Axelrod* : 258
Bone Poem *Nancy Willard* : 259
to my friend, jerina *Lucille Clifton* : 260
Couvade *Michael Blumenthal* : 261
Rape *Adrienne Rich* : 263
Margo *Francine Ringold* : 264
Change of Life *Constance Urdang* : 265

Mental Illness: The Shadow of the Obsessive Idea

- An Invalid *Amy Gerstler* : 269
Landscape *Marguerite Bouvard* : 273
The Legacy *Judith Minty* : 274
Rorschach Test *Spencer Brown* : 275
Agoraphobia *Susan Hahn* : 277
The Improvement *Vern Rutsala* : 278
In Such an Unhappy Neighborhood, Carlos
Cynthia MacDonald : 279
To Make a Dragon Move: From the Diary of an Anorexic
Pamela White Hadas : 280
The Shulamite Girl *Brenda Hillman* : 283

- Wait *Timothy Steele* : 285
 The Suicide *David Posner* : 286
 Suicide's Note *Langston Hughes* : 287
 To a Young Woman Considering Suicide *Peter Sears* : 288
 In the Place Where the Corridors Watch Your
 Every Move *Kelly Cherry* : 289
 To D——, Dead by Her Own Hand *Howard Nemerov* : 290
 Dropping toward Stillness *Rose Marcel* : 291
 Claustrophobia *Susan Hahn* : 292
 Schizophrenic Girl *X. J. Kennedy* : 293
 Evening in the Sanitarium *Louise Bogan* : 294
 Counting the Mad *Donald Justice* : 296
 Shocking Treatment *Rika Lesser* : 297
 From a Girl in a Mental Institution *Diane Wakoski* : 299
 The Invisible Woman *Robin Morgan* : 301
 At the Hospital *Carl Dennis* : 302
 Visit to My Committed Grandma *Leonard Nathan* : 303
 The Asylum *Hayden Carruth* : 304

Disability: Their Lockstep Tight as Lilac Buds

- The Affect of Elms *Reginald Gibbons* : 307
 Day Ten after Heart Surgery, Signing a Check
 Carole Simmons Oles : 308
 Another Tree *Gail Mazur* : 310
 A Memory *Gary Gildner* : 312
 Stroke Patient *Rochelle Ratner* : 313
 The Handicapped *Philip Dacey* : 314
 Rehabilitation Center *Maxine Kumin* : 316
 The Game *Harold Bond* : 317
 Global Aphasia *Enid Shomer* : 319
 Enid Field: In Memoriam *Gloria Maxson* : 320
 A Question of Energy *Amber Coverdale Sumrall* : 321
 The Stroke *Christopher Fahy* : 322
 Angles *Dixie Partridge* : 323
 The Tingle *Norman Andrew Kirk* : 324
 The Old Hooper *Lillian Morrison* : 326

After Being Paralyzed from the Neck down for Twenty Years,
Mr. Wallace Gets a Chin-Operated Motorized Wheelchair
Ronald Wallace : 327

"To: The Access Committee . . ." *H. N. Beckerman* : 328

To a Man Going Blind *John Haines* : 329

Black Lightning *Arthur Sze* : 330

The Basket Case *Richard Frost* : 331

Brain Tumor *Terese Svoboda* : 332

The Steel Plate *Yusef Komunyakaa* : 333

David *Francine Ringold* : 335

Space *Maura Stanton* : 336

Reading a Violent Love Poem to the Deaf

Enid Shomer : 338

Fingers, Fists, Gabriel's Wings *Michael Cleary* : 340

How to Sign *Laurie Stroblas* : 341

Osteoporosis *Robin Becker* : 342

Spastic Child *Vassar Miller* : 343

Song for My Son *Marilyn Davis* : 344

Jenny *John Mann Astrachan* : 345

Clinics *Michael Bachstein* : 346

Social Issues: Hungry and Frightened by Namelessness

Empty Trees *Jack Stewart* : 349

A Pilgrim of Pilgrims *William Logan* : 350

Diminishment *Nancy Mairs* : 351

Agnes McGurrin *Peter Oresick* : 352

A Pair of Shoes *Theodore Weiss* : 354

Alive *Philip Appleman* : 356

As Long as You're Happy *Jack Myers* : 358

The Minneapolis Poem *James Wright* : 359

County Ward *Gary Soto* : 362

Veteran's Hospital *Ben Belitt* : 364

The Man Stuck between His Shoes *Jim Daniels* : 366

East Washington Street Plasma Center *Jared Carter* : 367

The Addict *Anne Sexton* : 368

Literal *Heather McHugh* : 370

In the Waiting Room *David Bergman* : 371

Elegy for John, My Student Dead of AIDS*Robert Cording* : 375**Tarantula or The Dance of Death** *Anthony Hecht* : 377**The Eulogy** *Carol Muske* : 378**On Market Street** *Elaine Terranova* : 380**There Now** *Debora Greger* : 381**Old Women** *Judith Ortiz Cofer* : 383**Near the Old People's Home** *Howard Nemerov* : 384**The Very Old** *Ted Kooser* : 385**The Social Impact of Corporate Disinvestment***Peter Oresick* : 386**The Ones That Are Thrown Out** *Miller Williams* : 387**The Retarded Children Find a World Built Just for Them***Diana O'Hehir* : 388**Of a Night Fed with No Forgetfulness** *J. P. White* : 389**The Prisoner** *L. S. Asekoff* : 390**Simple Truths** *William Heyen* : 392**Elegy** *Susan Kinsolving* : 395**Abortion** *Ai* : 396**The Nursing Home** *David Ray* : 397**Accident** *Karin T. Ash* : 398**A Twenty-Four-Week Premie, Change of Shift***Belle Waring* : 399**Secret Places of Forrest Lane** *Emily Grosholz* : 401**Death Psalm: O Lord of Mysteries** *Denise Levertov* : 402**Lullaby** *Jon Mukand* : 404

Permissions : 405

Index : 423