

When We Can Only Pass On By

The broken winged pigeon
hops to doom down the freeway
with a knowing wide red eye

reminding me how
two hospital-bound Haitian girls
entrap me with their desperate stares

one lying paralyzed, naked in her pee
her sacral ulcer is growing by the week

the other, fixed in burn-scarred leather legs
rigid long enough that they may never dance

My face can not hide the prognosis, written bold

Their dark eyes, even now, beseech a miracle from me

Ward Trueblood, 2010

Bed Side Teaching

We practice the art of consideration,
reverse the role and ask your help,
wearing lightly the white coat badge,
knowing of sleepless nights and shackling pain,
yet rarely is the request denied.

Can we harness the puzzle of your illness,
the sequential unfolding story,
a fingernail shape and pleural rub,
then paste the mystery answer in the chart?

Teacher and student in joint pursuit while
you again define your title: as patient.

Ward Trueblood

Trauma Operating Room #10
For Tom Nguyen, graduating Chief Resident

You will remember the days when handed
a crisis, without advice, when
knowing the answer pushes you beyond comfort.
Teammates, teachers, old reliables, now gone,
like so many others, off the peloton.
The weight and your response will change you,
newly alone in a crowded room.

Ward Trueblood, June 2010