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Civic Hospital, Emergency Ward / Reluctant Spring

Dirk J. Verhulst

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Civic Hospital, Emergency Ward / Reluctant Spring

Abstract

Civic Hospital, Emergency Ward: In the waiting room my wife rests her pain on my shoulder; the broken bones are hidden below the surface of her skin. Reluctant Spring: This spring the birds fly low above the trees; their new green skin not yet able to hide the bones of branches.

Additional Keywords

Poetry; Civic Hospital; Reluctant Spring; Dirk J. Verhulst

CIVIC HOSPITAL, EMERGENCY WARD

by Dirk J. Verhulst

*In the waiting room
my wife rests her pain
on my shoulder;
the broken bones are hidden
below the surface of her skin.
Beside us a woman holds her silent baby.
"She hasn't wakened all day,"
the mother tells me;
there is fear in her eyes.
Across the room a family huddles together,
speaking in hushed voices about someone
who isn't there.*

*Every few minutes a name is called
over the loudspeaker. Each time someone rises
and disappears down the long corridor;
they do not come back.*

*Hours go by. The room is still full.
Other people have come to take the places
of the ones who have gone.
No one speaks.
My wife continues to sleep;
I can hear the bones mending in the silence.*

*Finally, her name is called.
I hold her close and pretend I didn't hear.
The others in the room look at each other
to see who will rise and go.
I feign ignorance and holding my wife tighter
I tell the disembodied voice
"There is no one here by that name."*

RELUCTANT SPRING

by Dirk J. Verhulst

*This spring
the birds fly low
above the trees;
their new green skin
not yet able to hide
the bones of branches.*

*On the corner
madmen juggle
the children of May
while the crowd applauds,
pretending there is no dark
side to summer.*

*Behind a window
a young mother lies
between white winter sheets
as the cancer tightens
around her throat.*

*For us
the clarity of summer's knowing
remains a rumour
we debated in low voices
as we huddled
around the cold fires
of winter.*