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POETRY | SPRING 2014

## Healing Hands

By John Berens

There is healing in your hands  
Says the woman, many years behind her steel eyes  
Her words surprise me, a brand new student  
Follower of Hippocrates and Osler  
My coat impeccably white  
My soul equally untarnished  
I look down at my long, thin fingers  
I see nothing more than my anatomy  
A fantastic collection of bones and flesh  
And muscles, not yet programed to assess and diagnose  
Still, I fumble through the exam  
My patient Patient consents with gentle smile  
All the while I wonder where that healing hides.  
Years pass, and I stand on the brink of metamorphosis  
Transformation from shadow and actor  
To physician, noble and true  
I again look down at my hands and into the past  
Now I see hands, gloved for life-saving surgery  
Hands bringing new life into the world  
Hands discovering the sad truths of our common fate  
Hands giving comfort and hope and love  
Now I can see the healing in my hands  
Unsure of where it came from  
Or even when it appeared  
Perhaps it existed with the steel-eyed lady  
Who was wise enough to see it  
But now that I see it there, too  
Engrained deep within the anatomy  
I am ready to take my healing hands into the world  
To bring relief and hope and life  
May my coat take all the stains and filth  
And leave my soul untouched

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