
POETRY | FALL 2015

The Appointment

By Ronald Lands

Tap water trickles as you
brace against the sink and dab
a wash cloth at lines and wrinkles
around your eyes.
Your face in the mirror asks
about the time, and when mine
answers, you say something
under your breath as if
being late would mean the end
of the world. I wonder
if being early might postpone it.
My reflection, steadies yours
with its hand on your shoulder,
an image of time that has lapsed
too fast, neither of us ready for you to go.

Ron Lands is a clinical professor of medicine at the University of Tennessee where he teaches and practices hematology. Prior to his partial retirement, he practiced medical oncology and hematology near the community where he grew up, and has experienced both the privilege and burden of treating friends, acquaintances and a few relatives. His writing is drawn from that experience, and often deals with poor, uneducated people and how they grapple with matters of life and death. At the age of 50, he pursued an MFA at Queen's University of Charlotte to better tell their story. He continues to practice because of his love for the biology in medicine and the stories that make it human.
