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POETRY | FALL 2022

## With My 20-year-old Son in the Eye Doctor's Office

By Richard Kravitz

It's become ritualized.  
Every six weeks we sit  
in the ophthalmologist's sanctuary  
while she swings out the large  
slit lamp apparatus,  
as if she were removing  
the Torah from the Ark,  
and examines your eyes, expertly  
shifting small, moveable parts,  
applying her eyes, lens  
on lens on lens, to yours,  
reading the ancient script  
of the uveal tract.

I pray to myself:  
"Scatter, encroaching cells!  
Cower and shrink back  
from this shining light,  
this truth and healing  
she brings to the very interior  
of your tiny globes."  
But I wander in a wilderness of illness  
without consolation.

Is the pressure up?  
Has the inflammation returned?  
You're good, patient,  
expertize yourself in describing  
the various ways your eyes don't feel  
quite right: sensitive to the light, the glare,  
easily fatigued, hard to focus,  
the problems of seeing through smoke  
or snow. You need me, your doctor-father,  
less and less. Your mother  
asks the questions of a worried mother,  
working to make those questions  
sound informed, rational,  
muffling the shriek of fear  
that you'll go blind.

You tolerate that as well.

I'm useless. To inhabit her  
I fall in love  
with your young, goddess-like,  
Botswanan doctor, so lilting in voice  
that she could be singing a lullaby,  
to care for and cure you  
without imposing.  
Despite my seniority and status  
I address her only as doctor,  
a supplicant like any other patient.

This will be my job  
into retirement, senescence,  
even beyond death,  
to accompany you every six weeks,  
angel to your eyes.  
I will sit with you,  
believing you need me,  
my eternal presence,  
but you, however sighted,  
will hold my hand,  
the blinded leading the love blind,  
reminding me  
of the gift of your life.

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