

POETRY | SPRING 2015

E.B.

By **Amy Caruso Brown**

His blue eyes flickered with kindly warmth,
Though it seemed to hurt too much to smile.
A lifetime of suffering carved on his face.
When she left his room, the doctor cried.

She wasn't prepared. Not for the smell.
Like gym socks left to molder,
And underneath, the bite of iron.
It was the smell of death,
Alien without antiseptic and formaldehyde.

Afterwards, she thought of her own face,
Not the clinical gaze, but what might have been betrayed
In the comma-curl of a lip,
The subtle radius of a pupil.

Already realizing she had
Only one thing to offer this gentle man,
Not even the gentlest of touches.
Just face to face, to share and bear witness.

Amy Caruso Brown is an assistant professor of bioethics and humanities and a pediatric oncologist at SUNY Upstate Medical University in Syracuse, NY.

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