**The Foreign Office**

Waiting in the doctor’s office,

The monumental chairs refuse to sit.

With a craftsman’s eye for kindling

I reconnoiter the blanched beachhead for safe landing.

Born oversized to greenish-brown lesions of wood,

Stepparents of enamel and chrome, some sit full-throttled,

Most uncomfortably held captives for the Coliseum,

Gaze at their chained-to-small comfort stares.

Fast learning comes in life’s sitting room,

How wee bits of gratitude can harbor

The sweetest preface to that “first bitter pill,”

Wiser men than I leave baneful

Epilogues spilling the beans,

The spirits of shaking hands.

Time is played out like a bad hand

In these paneled and poker-faced rooms.

Health is slower than Illness,

Slower than the role call

From the meadow-bright nurse’s cap

Standing by itself in sheer horror.

I joke with the doctor over semantics:

‘dia’ the root for ‘two,’ and ‘gnosis’ for ‘know,’

Your diagnosis doctor, is ‘the two of us don’t know.’

Art says ‘thank you’ for not mentioning my name

In the capsulated privacy of four walls

Never having the pleasure

Of meeting one another,

Weathering some still and placid prints,

Spent in suspending their life sentences

To cheer up Dr. Fox’s wallpaper flowers.

Closer in the medical halls,

Near the fox holes of rubber gloves,

Doomed to hang at noon,

Dangles the ‘real’ walled ‘art.’

Some relentless bones never had their muscles

Miranda-ized, and skeletal frame drawings

Constitutionalized with nervous amendments

All in splendid sepia glow,

Retaining their original yellow

By adolescent Michelangelos.