

Susan Sink

Healing Warts at Christ's Chapel Assembly of God Church

The widows came on swollen legs and feet;
the pastor brought his gnarled fingers; the parents
of the lost child with their distracted look,
the pianist with a French twist to deny the tumor.

They all came down the aisle to pray
for my teenage sister, who had warts.
They believed enough to press their hands
to hers eagerly, wanting God to knot

their joints with His strength, the sap flow
through their spotted skins on its way to heal the young.
They were filled with visions of blind eyes opened by mud
and spit, by t.v. miracles. They were tongued inarticulate with hope.

And my sister was a teenage girl who hadn't eaten
a full meal in months, or raised her hand in class,
or practiced the piano, or clapped in astonishment
or praise, or held anyone's hand, or even touched anyone.

After attempts to burn the sores away and private,
useless family prayers, we admitted our need
and called-- and it was clear who answered.
I'd been afraid they would scorn the petty request,

afraid my sister would be hurt by the ordeal of this love:
stretching blemished hands to those who expected
miracles for their children. But it was also this simple:
their hands on her hands, their human voices.

It wasn't the healing, ever, that mattered.
It was the love, even done this poorly,
what little we could do with what the world allowed:
our battered hands and this God.

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