

EMERGENCY ROOM

**DONALD
LEVERING**

My daughter was screaming
as the aged doctor repositioned
the tendon back inside her wound
and began to stitch her thumb
when this unknown man appeared
to hold her other hand.

Said he was here for his father,
who'd been mugged but was stable,
but when he'd heard my daughter,
he'd slipped past all the rules,
smelling of marijuana,
to hold her hand.

I bless you, and I bless all doctors,
he said in his Spanish accent.

This one here is the best.

Look at this scar on my wrist.

*I was six when this doctor here
pulled the pane glass out of it.*

*He smiled sadly. That wasn't
the only time I needed fixing up.*

Look at my eyelids.

Her eyes fixed on their scars.

They were welded closed

*by the heat of the exploding truck
that threw me four stories up
before I landed fifty-seven feet away,
came down like a cat, breaking both wrists,
my collarbone, my spine in three places.
Paralyzed when the doctors
slit open my eyes.
I shouldn't be walking now,
shouldn't be able to see.
But God bless the doctors. This one here
is the best. You'll get your thumb back.
My daughter had stopped whimpering.
But I'll never get back my daughter,
he said with brimming eyes,
killed in a car wreck,
as he squeezed my daughter's hand.*