

# *The Healing Muse*

## *Volume 7 Reader's Guide*

- ✚ Interpret the significance of the cover art. Why do you think it was chosen for the Fall 2007 edition of *The Healing Muse*? Does it reflect the issue? How, why or why not?
- ✚ Is the “detached concern” that Campo discusses in his interview the basis for a large number of pieces in *The Healing Muse*? Why is this idea so controversial? How can we bridge the gap between acting both professional and personable? (foreword, p. x)
- ✚ Comment on the crescendo of cold hot calm adjectives in Baker’s poem, “Refrigerator.” How do her syntax choices evoke these same thoughts and feelings within the reader? (p. 15)
- ✚ Boyd uses her radiologist’s diagnosis as a stepping-stone for her poem, “Shade.” How does his statement metaphorically influence the overall theme of her piece? (p. 37)
- ✚ What does it mean when Weinstein writes, “He felt like a cardboard version of himself,” in his piece, “Smilo at Night?” Why does he choose to capitalize the “O” in “Overnight” on the following page? How do Smilo’s actions at the end of the story reflect his past? (p. 72)
- ✚ What is the significance of the repetitive exclamation, “check,” in Melissa Cloonan’s piece *Wednesday Night*? (p. 75)
- ✚ Compare and contrast the non-fiction and fiction pieces both entitled, “The Hat.” Is the shared title the only thing the two stories have in common? (p. 85- Strickling, p. 105- Kuhlman).
- ✚ As Howe discusses marriage vows in her story, “Abandoned, Abandoner,” she writes, “At first glance this vow only seems to involve two people; the husband and the wife. It is now seen that the roots of familial relationships spread its branches down the family tree and affect future generations. But what if those future generations are not capable of caring for others? What type of stigma does society place on the weak or selfish?” (p. 93)
  - Discuss Howe’s correlation between marriage vows and her open-ended questions in relation to her piece.
  - Comment on her choice to end her piece with a short poem. How would the tone of the story change if instead it began with the poem?
- ✚ Do you think the visual shape of Ferris-Olson’s poem, “Onion,” enhances or detracts from her words? Why do you think she made this deliberate choice? How does this piece fit into the *Healing Muse*’s medical theme? (p. 100)
- ✚ What is the significance of the last two rhyming lines in Frost’s poem, “Intimate Details?” (p. 101)

- ✚ How does Evans' visual stanza structure of her poem, "Like a Train," emphasize the content of her piece? Note specific lines. (p. 113)
- ✚ Do you agree with Scott's description of surgery in the second paragraph of her piece, "Restoration?" How does her description of the body as a machine speak for the overall theme of her piece? (p. 129)
- ✚ Discuss Holmberg's use of biblical references that appear in her poem, "Sutures." Did you notice them during your initial reading? How do they partner with her poem? What is to be said about a connection between religion and medicine? (p. 135)
- ✚ How does Lessen-Reiche make a connection between cancer and literary devices (metaphor, simile, sonata) mentioned in the middle of her poem, "Morning Tapestry: A Sonata of Pain?" (p. 137)

*The Healing Muse* is SUNY Upstate Medical University's journal of literary and visual arts published annually by the Center for Bioethics and Humanities at SUNY Upstate Medical University.

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