

Posterior Instrumented Fusion for Adolescent Idiopathic Scoliosis

The mark between my shoulder blades is flesh zipped tight and thin,
a silver stripe of lavender that stretches neck to waist.
See the thumb print dented where the scalpel sliced my skin:
my back un-picked, then darned by threads that seamed and stitched and laced.
Between the cut and sewing up my mind was shuttered murk,
anaesthetized to lie inert as bone and nerve were bared,
muscle stripped by surgeon's hands, my meaty spine his work,
the twisted cord of vertebrae a darkness to be dared.
Undressed of skin for five stiff hours this blood-webbed gap was lined
with metal rods, with hooks, with screws, to force my backbone straight.
A two inch gain as curves were stretched – a permanent unwind
of willful bone once bent skewwhiff, now pinned with heavy weight.
From carpentry to seamstressing as skin became a cloak
to cover up the scaffolding that left my body raw.
A needle sewed a score of red. At six o'clock I woke,
The morphine black blown out by light, my back already sore.

A satin streak now marks the months suspended in my pain.
Recovery has been condensed to tissue pearled and taut.
The spine beneath solidified, this overlay a stain
of contoured flesh now fading quick, a puckered afterthought.