

Mistaken Identity

Category: Poems

written by Kathleen Grieger | April 10, 2009

Surgery finished,

I finally sleep

Pushing my shoulders,
the technician wakes me

“Come now, we need
a chest x-ray”

Smiling, she pulls me
into position

The x-ray machine
tight against me

Finally getting a chance,
I ask what she is doing

“Oh,” she says “I have
the wrong one

You are not a 64
year old male”

Lying me down,
she walks away

As I fall back to sleep,
I wonder, now bald

what I must
look like

About the poet:

Kathleen Grieger has published poetry in many venues, including *Free Verse*, *Caduceus*, *Blood and Thunder: Musings on the Art of Medicine*, *The Healing Muse* and online in [Yale Journal for Humanities in Medicine](#) and [Breath and Shadow](#). She has written hundreds of poems about her brain surgeries as well as her interactions with physicians and other healthcare professionals. Her poems are currently used at Froedtert Hospital in Milwaukee to teach that patients are people first.

About the poem:

“Frustrated with the problems and errors that were hugely complicating my

medical treatment after brain surgery, I realized that it was necessary for me to start writing again. Because I'd been so busy before, my poetry had been set aside; picking it up again was the best thing I've ever done."

Poetry editors:

Judy Schaefer and Johanna Shapiro