

# Redesigning the practice of medicine

Category: Poems

written by Pamela Mitchell | May 7, 2008

**Pamela Mitchell**

what if we went slowly thoughtfully about the business of healing  
what if I bowed to you and you to me before we touched aching bodies  
what if we said out loud this is sacred work might I be made worthy  
what if I blessed your hands and you mine before we began  
repairing delivering dressing listening to  
broken bodies hungry souls

would we then return to the place where so long ago we felt called  
where we knew for sure that we did indeed have hearts  
hearts that beat confidently full of ambition  
hearts that were courageous enough to break  
again and again and again  
hearts that were not afraid to weep

at the sheer beauty of fulminating organ  
the raw pain of splintered fracture  
the howling loss of bodily movement

what if we were unafraid to weep at the joy of newborns crowning  
or the resurrection of hearts expired

what if we were unafraid to say I do not know the answer  
and welcomed Humility into our practice  
what if we sat down with Her said a blessing  
and quietly contemplated  
the Mystery

## **About the poet:**

A nurse for thirty years, Pam Mitchell RN MFA currently enjoys nursing in mental health. She was anthologized in *Intensive Care* (Cortney Davis and Judy Schaefer, eds, University of Iowa Press, 2003) and has been published in other literary venues.

## **About the poem:**

*“Redesigning the Practice of Medicine* was born in a moment of deep grief and frustration. I was reflecting upon the many years I’d spent in my profession and longing for the days when I’d had more time with patients. I remembered a sense of collegiality and a more humane approach to providing care. Those were rare and cherished times that I continue to long for and seek out. In writing this poem, I began to realize a great deal about the privilege granted by being a nurse. When I realized how many bodies I had held, rocked,

covered and touched, I began to shudder with a sense of sheer awe.”