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Poems
by
doctors

Origami

Arthur Clark

At first, a long time ago,
there were only the folds of your armpits
and your buttocks and groin and eyes,
then the folds of the palms
whereby Madame Ricardo purported to know your future.
Much later came two folds on the forehead.
The folds at the eyes extended,
the ones between the nose and lip grew deep.
More folding. Vertical folds crossed the horizontal,
summers folded onto autumns, and the year
was folded by year and put on year away.
Vast sorrows were folded onto minor triumphs,
tucked under the slip of memory and lost.
Then I began to see the process,
in long shadows, by altered evening light,
as a process, and how each folding
brings you closer to perfection of the finished piece.

Arthur Clark is a neuropathologist practising in Calgary, Alberta. This poem is from *The Naked Physician: Poems about the Lives of Patients and Doctors*, edited by R. Charach (Quarry Press). Reproduced by kind permission of the author.

Chosen by Femi Oyeboode.

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