

To Be Seen

Jericho Brown

You will forgive me if I carry the tone of a preacher.
Surely, you understand, a man in the midst of dying
Must have a point, which is not to say that I am dying
Exactly. My doctor tells me I might live
Longer than most, since I see him more than most.
Of course, he cannot be trusted nor can any man
Who promises you life based on his being seen.
Understand also, then, that a point and a message are
Indeed quite different. All messages issue forth from
The chosen: a prophet, an angel, the whitest
Dove — those who hear the voice of God and other
Good music. A point, on the other hand, is made
By one who chooses but claims to have been chosen
So as not to be punished for bringing bad news:
The preacher, the poet, my doctor — those who talk
About God because they want to speak in metaphors.
My doctor, for instance, insists on the metaphor of war;
It's always the virus that attacks and the cells that fight or
Die fighting. I even remember him saying the word siege
When another rash returned. Here I am dying
While he makes a battle of my body — anything to be seen
When all he really means is to grab me by the chin
And, like God the Father, say through clenched teeth,
Look at me when I'm talking to you. Your healing is
Not in my hands, though I touch as if to make you whole.

Brown, J. (2008). To be seen. <https://missourireview.com/jericho-brown-to-be-seen>