

TO THOSE DOCTORS AND OTHERS IT MAY CONCERN

These last notes from my research lab may be
unfinished when found. My jar of reprieves is empty.
I have entered the complex process called death.
And my dear sworn-by-Apollo colleagues
(who labeled me loner, prima donna, bastard),
despite all the times we've seen death, heard it,
caused it on occasion,
we don't know much about it, do we?

Based on my forte for human horology, my time
will stop near midnight. Till then, I write
my thoughts as a poem:
No more late hours to haul my heaviness
up the ladder to inhale library dust,
mine the only fingerprints claiming those heights
since my old professor's. No more mornings to stare
through the lighted shaft probing mindless obscenities
feeding on healthy tissue. Nor afternoons to breed
and stalk the seething child-killers in glass cages.
Having defeated one once, I'm driven to destroy others.
But my demon, destructive as any virus, has come again
with the fuel bill. Unpaid, he's shutting my shop.

No time left to isolate the mutant entity I suspect
lay each day beneath my eye imitating innocence.
My life's goal--to expose it to world attack, unlock
doors, to stand and throw Messianic lightning down
the corridors of science. I would deal with the devil
to do it. But the dream must be delivered by others.

I move away from magnification and atomic rhythms
to culture my notebook in starlight. What do I know
of poetry? Yet the minutes allow for nothing else.
Now is distilled sediment, vitro-essence of failure
sealing my cloudy siphons with unanswers.
My sulphuric tongue is already silent. And no life
will be better for an eleventh hour poem.

So much waste. Great strides to standstills. Unless--
that one! My wire-drawn student who yesterday
challenged the godsmith. And turning to dispute me
in the flush of discovery, incised and laid open
a moment by my point, gave me a glimpse
of the bright burning edge of a demon I know.

To that damned and holy host-- that lonely pupil--
I leave all I have. The harsh shine of my keys--
and my only poem.

--Glenn Holloway