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A Doctrine of Signatures

Naomi Zahler
Bard College

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First you enter the waiting room. There's a TV on with a segment about how to cook five cheese baked macaroni with hidden veggies so the kids get their vitamins. All you've had to eat in the past 24 hours is blue and yellow gatorade. You approach the receptionist who sternly asks you if you followed your diet. You sit down in one of the many chairs that line the wall. Three chairs over from you sits a woman playing solitaire on her kindle. Every fifteen minutes an alarm goes off on her phone and she runs up the receptionist desk to breath into a bag. This test will determine if she has too much bacteria in her small intestine. The receptionist calls your name and the nurse at the door leads you to the back where you put on a long hospital gown that ties in the back. You are a patient now. The hospital puts a bracelet on your wrist with a barcode to scan you. The nurse hands you two bottles of thick yellow liquid. A little thicker than cough syrup. You have an hour and a half to drink it all. Two hours later the nurse returns. "You doing ok?" He leads you back to another room with clean white hospital beds and pale green curtains. You lay down in the the bed while nurses shuffle in and out, taking your blood pressure, your temperature and your pulse, writing down the numbers. "Right arm or left? Do you care?" Your IV is placed though it takes them a few tries. As you approach the testing room, drowning in your oversized gown with your back exposed, you hear the growing sounds of mechanical whirring, banging, and pounding. As your body is fed back and forth through this device, the voice on the intercom instructs you to hold your breath a different intervals. The men on the other side of the glass stare intently at their screens. Each interval is accompanied by a combination of automated whirs and tones. Forty-five minutes later your IV is removed, your arm wrapped in cotton and you are allowed to change back into your clothes. The receptionist hands you a packet of printed out instructions for exiting your procedure- when you are allowed to eat again, and what signs to look for in case of an emergency. Now you must wait. What did the technician see? What will the doctor say? What is inside you?

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