



Barbara Benton

### Healing Chair

At 7:00 a.m., after Lemon Zinger  
And half a whole-wheat pita,

She sits on the hard-back chair at the window,  
The curtains drawn open—southern exposure.

She has more comfortable chairs, a sofa: cushioned,  
Lazy, floral. No. They are not for this.

(Do not ask for its story; you'll oblige her to  
Tell you. It's long and, she will admit, half untrue.

The only thing certain is it was her mother's and her  
Mother's mother's, at precisely this hour.)

Dutifully, the sun falls in, splashing her lap;  
She acknowledges its presence, closes her eyes.

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She begins by jabbing away at her ego, scraping  
The ceiling of her defenses;

At 7:30, give or take, when the plaster  
Is threadbare, about to

Collapse on her, God comes rushing in  
"Irresistibly," she says.

She fills with Light—marvelous, buoyant—then,  
While she has the Divine Attention,

She chants her litany of neighbors, friends,  
Acquaintances, family—her hurting universe—

And so many names paper over her ceiling,  
Overlapping, weaving, delighting in touching.

The Light washes over them—baptismal fire. For nine  
Infinite seconds, she is the vehicle

for the world's healing.

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She knows, of course, God can't be contained,  
That she would otherwise burst or melt.

Still, she says, "although it's laborious, the world  
And I need it." And so,

evidently, does God.

—C. Michael Gibson

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member of Woodbury  
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