

After the biopsy

by [Anya Silver](#) in the [July 25, 2006](#) issue

“Each time that we have some pain to go through, we can say to ourselves quite truly that it is the universe, the order and beauty of the world, and the obedience of creation to God that are entering our body. After that, how can we fail to bless with tenderest gratitude the Love that sends us this gift?”

—Simone Weil

The pathology report an icon; the tissue
staining the slide, God’s kaleidoscope.
And those cells, obeying their DNA,
cosmic dust as they whirl and split.
Why not praise cancer, relentless, blind,
that seeks and finds the lymph and blood?
Because I am unthankful, rude.
Because if I linger over this gift,
I will change, I will vanish from the earth.
In Russia, an icon of Mary has wept
for twenty years. Mary, do you see
my nuclei mutating, like words
in “whisper down the lane”? This same God
took your son away. Help me disobey.