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Poems by doctors

Rapunzel

Jason David Eubanks

Her pasty white flesh is prodigious,
Enough to completely dislocate her knee
With a simple fall from standing,
Her pulseless leg lying frightened
On the table where this grown woman
Whimpers like a child –
But she is known most for her hair,
Or the absence thereof,
The tiny islands of centimetric stubble
Surrounded by a sea of battered scalp
Raped of its rolling, wavy color
By desperate hands –
Trichotillomania,
They say under hushed breaths,
And some will even eat it,
The trichobezoar swimming in the
Sewage of the gluttonous bowels –
Rapunzel, Rapunzel, let down your hair –
In your solitary tower
You have pulled the braided ladder
Down to the last few follicles
In hopes the enchantress would leave you,
Alone –
You are alone,
A spectacled-bald and banished Rapunzel
Who screams in horror
As my pulling hands deliver you
A stable reduction.

Jason David Eubanks, MD, is a graduate of Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine in Cleveland, Ohio and a current Spine Fellow in Orthopaedic Surgery at the University of Pittsburgh Medical Center. His poetry has been published in numerous literary and medical journals. Among others, these include *JAMA*, *Annals of Internal Medicine*, *Annals of Emergency Medicine* and *The Pharos*. Dr Eubanks' book, *Rotations: a Medical Student's Clinical Experience*, is a collection of poems, the first of its kind, written about the process of becoming a doctor. *Rapunzel* represents one of Dr Eubanks' more recent psychiatric poems. It emanates from a first-hand encounter with a patient as a resident in the trauma bay.

Researched by Femi Oyeboode.

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