

# The "Eyes" have it



Illustration by Steve Derrick

They say, "The eyes have it," when a motion is passed,  
but a "motion of eyes" often leaves me type-cast.

In a sea of white, not just coats, but most faces,  
hallways, laboratories, and sterile places  
come the well-perfected looks and sideways stares  
not at me, but through me, like I'm made of air.  
Though they dare not return my conciliatory gaze,  
if they did, they would find there, a familiarity of days.  
Spent in firm dedication, countless hours we've studied  
though my appearance, for them, the similarities have  
muddied.

It's true, "the eyes have it," both theirs and mine,  
but stereotypes can be broken with experiences and time.

"You've surprised me," he says, "your work is superior."  
But what cause for confoundment, if not my exterior?  
I've done nothing but labor to exceed expectations,  
and yet when I do, there are perplexed exclamations.  
You stay amazed, while I persist unphased.  
I've grown a bit too accustomed to ambiguous praise.  
Though it stung in the moment, we've established rapport.  
For the skills that you've taught me, I couldn't ask more.

It's true, "the eyes have it," both yours and mine too.  
We've learned from each other, now we see things anew.

Our eyes meet in greeting over safely masked faces.  
You assess my abilities as I go through the paces.  
Some of you accept me, take my greenness in stride.  
While others, your displeasure, you don't try to hide.  
Asking questions to my cohorts, but avoiding my face,  
you seem far less than comfortable with me in your space.

You tense when I touch you, your averted gaze cold;  
though I try to engage you, to your bias you hold.  
It's true, "the eyes have it," yours are brimmed with anxiety.  
Alas, I must battle the misperceptions of society.

Still in others I meet, I recognize an expression  
of a person who has encountered medical oppression.  
These eyes show relief; they glint anticipation  
as I represent achievement from a similar population.  
A quick nod of approval, the acceptance is there,  
an immediate understanding of the weight that we bear.  
The unspoken trust given...one I'll never take lightly,  
as just seeking care can be somewhat unlikely.

It's true, "the eyes have it," and I must keep my oath  
to ensure at-risk communities sustain medical growth.

My favorite eyes, though, are the children's I've met.  
Their view of the world still tenaciously unset.  
It's these youthful eyes that affect me the most,  
waiting impatiently in offices to be diagnosed.  
Most are too young to think of me as a color;  
just a man in a white coat who helps them feel better.  
But a few view my skin and it matches their own,  
and suddenly in this place, they feel less alone.

It's true, "the eyes have it," and the children often see  
with a far greater insight and a rare equality.

They say "the eyes have it," but for me it's the "eyes"  
speaking only truths, even those hoped disguised.

—Ronald Cox