Waiting Room

I am the room for all seasons,
the Waiting Room. Here the impatient
fidget, gossip, yawn and fret and sneeze. I am the room

for summer (sunburn, hay-fever, ear wax,
children falling out of plum trees, needing patching) ;

for autumn (arthritis and chesty coughs,
when the old feel time worrying at their bones) ;

for winter ('flu, and festival hangovers,
flourish of signatures on skiers' plaster of Paris) ;

for spring (O the springing spots of adolescence,
unwary pregnancies, depression, various kinds of itch) ;

I am the room that understands waiting,
with my box of elderly toys, my dog-eared Women's Owns,
permanent as repeat prescriptions, unanswerable as ageing,
heartening as the people who walk out smiling, weary

as doctors and nurses working on and on and on

U.A. Fanthorpe

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