World Above Free Poetry Night
Prompt 91: The Heart Doctor

A massive MI, myocardial infarction, happens on a plane from London
to LA. The woman doesn't know her distress is a symptom of her heart.

The pastor says, lift up your hearts, and we say, lift them to God.
Everyone else was amazed, but Mary pondered these things in her heart.

My yoga teacher can't decide whether to be anatomic or spiritual.
Sometimes she says sternum, sometimes she says space of the heart.

Green is the color of the fourth chakra. The one where energy spirals
both ways. From the back, from the front, both in and out of the heart.

My patient is very calm, says he won't harm himself. He has a plan.
He has no friends. He has no gun or sword. He's not the King of Hearts.

My mother-in-law gave me a black trunk to use as a hope chest.
I stored the quilt she made for me, a pattern of ribbons and hearts.

Deborah, you can pray and breathe and meditate and chant, give
and receive love, but you can't keep everyone safe in your heart.

Have you tried writing a ghazal? If you'd like to write one, Deborah Bayer's "The Heart Doctor" is a good model for you. Use at least five couplets, repeating a word at the end of the second line of each couplet as Bayer does with "heart." Name yourself in the last couplet. There are other rules poets writing in English often ignore, but you may want to look them up online and follow some of them.
1. Tell a secret and a lie, and never tell which is which. (Thanks to Peter Murphy, prompt writer for *More Challenges for the Delusional*, Diode Editions, for this idea.)
2. *Challenge for the Delusional:* Stanley Kunitz said he wanted the ending of a poem he wrote to be "both a door and a window." Use images that work like doors and windows in all your couplets.

Don't miss **World Above's next open mic and featured reading** at the Noyes Arts Garage in Atlantic City on Wednesday, April 17, 2024 at 7:00pm with Dimitri Reyes. Questions or comments about the prompt? Contact Barb Daniels: barbarajdaniels@comcast.net.