Poetry by Jim Blackburn
Art by Isabelle Scurry Chapman

Larry McMurtry

TERMS OF ENDEARMENT

Simon and Schuster

Virus Vigil

The Ring-Necked Duck

Watching people watching nature
In Houston's Hermann Park
As I walk to heal myself.

How do I heal?
How do I stir the cells within my body
To rise up and banish the invaders
That attack us all?
How do I take care of self
And nurture the flame that is me?
A flame that once was weak
But now shines brightly,
A flame that roars when I enter nature,
A flame that burns away the detritus
Of an aging body,
A flame fueled
By seeing the black and white duck
Bobbing on Hermann Park Lake,
A diving duck here on a small-water lake,
Paddling near the humans tossing popcorn,
A wild thing allowing me to come close
To see the lovely bill and the mark,
The black and white crisp and clean,
A rural duck finding sanctuary
Amidst the high rises of the city as do I,
Two travelers seeking health,

Seeking refuge, seeking respite within
The park within the big city.

So, this is how I heal,
Walking in Hermann Park,
Greeting the resting ducks
On a small-water lake,
And inhaling the spirit of life.