

JUST LIKE THAT

Waiting, I browsed the aisle
and gawked.

A display of braces,
canes and crutches hung
from wall hooks.

Shelved
beneath them were boxes of raised
toilet seats and sanitary briefs
for women and men.

Fish-oil
capsules, melatonin and Biofreeze
offered total health or relief
while U-shaped pillows promised
perfect sleep.

After I paid
my bill, I glimpsed a stripe
of printing pasted on the counter:
“Practice random kindness
and senseless acts of beauty.”

That changed a store devoted
to the prose of remedies for pain
into the laissez-faire of poetry.

Why
was I shocked?

I'd known
for years that anything poetic
happens by surprise, enlightening
as much as lightening, wherever
and whenever.

Just weeks ago
little Sarah exclaimed, “Today
is Friday, but sometimes it's Tuesday.”
Equally original was what
she said this morning when she woke,
“It's pitch light outside.”
And there was that total stranger
who saw me frowning between
flights and said, “Smile,

you're in Pittsburgh.”

And so

I smiled.

And everyone who overheard
him smiled in the selfsame way
that you are smiling now.