

# REFLECTION

*Steve Ablon, MD*

Chestnut Hill, MA, USA.

J Gen Intern Med 24(8):984  
DOI: 10.1007/s11606-009-0975-z  
© Steve Ablon 2009

---

## **Differential Diagnosis**

Joint pain, swelling, butterfly  
rash across the cheeks, fever,  
fatigue of grilled cheese,  
the crust cut off.

Anemia, low platelets,  
low white blood cells,  
abnormal kidney functions.  
To comfort myself I think of all

the sandwiches I have eaten.  
Black pools under her eyes,  
her brittle hair, knuckles red  
as peanut butter and grape jelly

on white Tip Top bread.  
I sit on the edge of her bed,  
precarious as a sub  
with hard salami, pimento loaf,

provolone on pumpnickel,  
corned beef, sauerkraut,  
Thousand Islands dressing.  
Lupus on the darkest rye.