

Body Language

What is a scar if not the memory of a once open wound?
 You press your finger between my toes, slide
 the soap up the side of my leg, until you reach the scar with
 the two holes, where the pins were
 inserted twenty years ago. Leaning back, I remember how
 I pulled the pin from the leg, how
 in a waist-high cast, I dragged myself
 from my room to show my parents what I had done.
 Your hand on my scar brings me back to the tub and I want
 to ask you: What do you feel
 when you touch me there? I want you to ask me: What are
 you feeling now? But we do not speak.
 You drop the soap in the water and I continue washing, alone.
 Do you know my father would
 bathe my feet, as you do, as if it was the most natural thing.
 But up to now, I have allowed
 only two pair of hands to touch me there,
 to be the salve for what still feels like an open wound.
 The skin has healed but the scars grow deeper—
 When you touch them what do they tell you about my life?

De Amerikaanse dichter **Kenny Fries** (54) las onlangs in Nederland voor uit eigen werk, op uitnodiging van Agnes van Wijnen en Disability Studies in Nederland. Hij is joods, gay en heeft een fysieke beperking. Als kind onderging hij meerdere operaties aan zijn voeten en benen. 'Body Language' verscheen oorspronkelijk in *Anesthesia, Poems*.

