“The Surgeon as Priest”
Richard Selzer

Structure/Main Sections

• Vesalius painting and going into surgery
• Joe Riker
• The temple of Asclepius
• Yeshi Dhonden
Selzer begins by describing an anonymous painting of Vesalius at the dissecting table, about to cut into the cadaver in front of him, yet glancing over his shoulder at a crucifix on the wall behind him. He then tells two medical stories in which spirituality has played a crucial role.

In the first, a man who has repeatedly refused to have a brain cancer operated on turns up one day healed, attributing it to the holy water a family member brought back from Lourdes. In the second, the Dalai Lama's personal physician does rounds in an American hospital and, using ancient techniques, diagnoses correctly, and in some detail, a case of congenital heart disease.
Asclepius
Subjective Poetic Images & Precise Technical Details

• “Exploring the Text” Question #7
• What rhetorical strategies does Selzer use to amplify his themes?
• Discussion in small groups...