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Whole-Body Counter, Marcus Whitman Elementary

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Whole-Body Counter, Marcus Whitman Elementary

The mobility of this new laboratory provides versatile capabilities for measuring internally deposited gamma-ray emitting radionuclides in human beings.

—Health Physics, November 1965

We were warned to shut our eyes.
Everyone was school-age now, our
kindergarten teacher reminded us,

old enough to follow directions
and do a little for our country.
My turn came and the scientists

strapped me in and a steady voice
prompted *The counter won't hurt,*
lie perfectly still, and mostly I did

and imagined what children
pretend America is, parks
bordered by feathery evergreens,

lawns so green and lush
they soothe the eyes and pupils
open like love—

a whole country of lawns
like that. Just once I peeked
and the machine had taken me in

like a spaceship and I moved
slow as the sun through the chamber's
smooth steel sky.

I shut my eyes again, pledged
to be still; how proud I was to be
a girl America could count on.