# Read This

From “A Wart On My Foot” by Severo Sarduy in the book LIFE SENTENCES: Writers, Artists, and AIDS *(Mercury House/ San Francisco)*

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After a quick glance the nonchalant nurse who was attending to me said the best thing would be to remove the wart surgically because it had grown so large and so deep, even though it was barely visible on the sole of my foot.

A few hours later I was on the table and the doctor was taking my blood pressure., asking me if I’d had any anesthetic yet, giving me an injection, making the first incisions.

“Do you feel anything?” he said.

“Nothing,” I replied, with the certainty that managing the microphones had taught me to feign.

“Or, yes,” I added immediately, “ I do have a feeling, but this has nothing to do with what’s going on here. That there’s something burning in the neighborhood outside. Smells like burnt rubber.”

“It’s not in the neighborhood outside,” he answered, but without looking at me, concentrating on his meticulous task, “and it’s not rubber. I’ve already removed the wart and now I’m cauterizing your skin. What you smell is singed human flesh.”

“We Jews,” he added without the slightest change in his expression, “are very familiar with that smell.”

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