

| | *ix. Peter Python.*

Among his well-trained audience
Peter Python's masculine physique
receives due deference.
Performing with Olympian skill,
he likes to place each helper off her guard
with knowing grin and sly critique.

Yet as he glides into his gown,
he notes with thoughtful frown,
that levity has never marred
their necessary focus on the task
of knowing when to mop his brow,
what to proffer, where and how -
enabling him to bask
(certain of being fully understood)
in their devotion for the greater good.

The curtain rises day by day
on the stage where he alone holds sway
and effortlessly plays the part
of noble sovereign, guardian of life
over open cavity and trembling heart,
not with a sceptre but a surgeon's knife.