

At The Eye Doctor's

STEPHEN R. ROBERTS

The doctor asks me to read
the eye chart, line five.
I think it begins with D
but it could be a B or an F.
He asks me if I've had any
problems with my eyes.
I tell him I seem to see
some things a few moments
before they actually happen.
I think he thinks I may be
a soothsayer of some sort,
or an obnoxious space alien
with no applicable insurance.
I can tell he doesn't like me.
He puts chrome and titanium
things onto or near the surface
of my left eye and asks,
how about this form of pain?
He follows it up with, what kind
of advance things have you seen?
I tell him about the break-in
down at the mustard museum
which he hasn't heard about

but it gets us to discussing
the various hues of the condiment.
From there we move on,
discussing the process of smashing
tomatoes into ketchup or catsup
and why there are two ways
of spelling the same thing.
An eyeball, he says, is more delicate
than the finest of tomatoes.
He squirts a fiery substance
into my other eye, then
requests I keep it open
to see what the future brings.