

Whose were the hands: Written in response to Michael Rosen's *ode to the NHS 'These are the hands'*



***Oxygen spectacles: child sized frames without lenses:
the Wolverhampton Hospitals' Heritage Collection:***

I can only imagine whose hands they were ...

that carefully drew the design in the years between wars
giving priority not just to function but to form, responding
perhaps to the distress of sick children being given through
a rubber mask the oxygen that their condition required ...

that shaped wires and tubes into specified forms and then
worked the metals to make the joints firm, knowing little
perhaps of those who might one day need their creations
but taking pride none the less in making them ready for use ...

that first gently fitted the frames to a young child's head in
the hope that their breathing might become less strained and
then perhaps gently brushing aside the lock of hair that fell over
the frames monitored their progress as their difficulties eased ...

this though I do not need to imagine, for mine are the hands ...

that consider them now, marvelling at their elegant simplicity,
at the ingenuity and commitment of all those, perhaps too often
unacknowledged, hands that now as then design and make the
physician's instruments we all depend on when most in need.