

Technetium

Element 43

hexagonal close-packing
crystal structure
silver fox of the table
unstable

Wavering in amongst
the cooling red giants
an occasional S, M or N star
showing off stellar nucleosynthesis
traces of Tc dredged up
revealed to us in the spectrum
winking

Technètos: 'artificial'
first element produced synthetically
found rarely inside the earth
radioactive fission product of uranium
no mark of it in our bodies
this group 7 maverick fierce to its core
uncompromising

Mendeleev knew
this transition metal
should be in the periodic gap
could feel it in his bones
squeezed between molybdenum and ruthenium
lowest-number of which all isotopes are radioactive
separated from its kin
alone

Tc-99m in its lineage
a metastable radioactive nuclear isomer
excited, used for medical imaging
gamma ray emissions put to great use
bonding with cancer cells
highlighting damage of the heart
Immunoscintigraphy
scanning brain, lungs, intestines, blood
its short-lived, half-life of six hours enough to do the trick
vital

spent nuclear fuel rods
glowing with our possible futures