

WARTHOG PODIATRY

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After years of studying how to relieve
world hobbling, Warthog stands
in a white coat, gnashing his tusks
under a blood-red sign: *Warthog Podiatry*.

Will the four wart-like protrusions
on his head upset patients? Will he need
constantly to explain, "They're great
for storing fat, and useful when males

fight over females—which happens a lot."
No need, if his patients are warthogs.
That sign, though, muddles things.
His name is Warthog, that's for sure:

Warthog A. Warthog. But is he
the animal, or the jiggly butt of a parental
joke about his cloven feet? (*Clover feet*,
he used to say, and thought them lucky

until children jeered.) Did he "go in for"
podiatry, as wackos do psychiatry,
to heal himself? What if he's not the doc,
but came to *see* a doc who may or may not

be a warthog and fix warthog feet?

“One way to find out,” he grunts,
backing through the office door
the way, in Transvaal, he’d back

into an abandoned aardvark burrow,
ready to burst out in a devastating
charge, if needed—which, bad feet and all,
it often was.