



Heart Sounds

Reflecting on Life on the Wards and the Illness of a Loved One in the Time of COVID-19

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Accepted: 2 November 2021 / Published online: 15 November 2021

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Early morning,
Barely audible over the din on the wards:
Lub-dub, whoosh.
So faint that I will myself to hear it
Recognizing that this requires practice,
For practice makes perfect.

Evening,
Not at bedside, but
Over the static of the phone:
A crack, waver, tremble.
The sound of heartbreak,
So deafening that I will myself to listen

The words cut through the pain.
He's dying, she says. Her husband, my grandfather.
A world away, really, and he is there.
And I am here,
Torn between two worlds

Stuck in a space between the space
Of heart and mind.
For I am training
To hear a patient's heart sounds, not
To be there for loved ones;
My presence *should be* natural, intuitive.
Yet you are a world away.

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I am the *not-doctor* who cannot hear your murmur,
Who cannot be there for you in your time of need,
And I'm sorry.
Yet I must press on, and I do...
For *perseverance* makes perfect.

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