HEALING ARTS

Sketchbook

Drawing to Remember

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My primary clinical role is as a palliative care and hospice physician. I dedicate the majority of my clinical time to an inpatient palliative care consult team as well as an inpatient hospice/palliative care unit. Because of the nature of my work, sadly, many of my patients will die while under my care. Over the years the patients can start to blur together. I often sketch my patients during conversation and try to write down specific words they say. I do these drawings in real time, on scraps of paper, shreds of sign-out lists, and other detritus. I cannot

always remember the names of my patients from years past or the clinical context, but when I look back at these drawings and words, I can remember the moments. In that way, I feel that they are still with me. In fact, I do not consider myself an artist. My hope in sharing these is that other readers of this journal who find that their patients are starting to blend over the years, might find the idea of simple sketches, simple recollection of words shared might help them to remember.

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