Sitting under the chair, in a bag marked “Patient Belongings” waits his coiled stethoscope, a grotesque ouroboros knotted over upon itself, tangled in obscene mockery of how twisted his intestines feel.

His crisp white coat swapped for formless hospital gown, this Acute Abdomen suffers three histories, three exams, three pairs of icy hands, with nothing heard or understood. One offers the syringe, but pain pales before the base, animal fear; what use is it now, to have been such a diligent student?

At four o’clock a kind soul appears, wraps him in a warm blanket. Sometimes there is only this: all else forgotten, just a warm blanket, and being left to wait.

Michael Yee

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