

From the Book of Treatment

And the Chemotherapy came to him
and said, Give Me your fields, your flowing fields
of hair, from atop your head to your toes
every single follicle—all of them
give them to Me, your Chemotherapy
so that you will feel naked although clothed.

And give Me your flock, your bountiful flock
of mucosal epithelial cells
the cells by which you consume and digest
give them to Me, your Chemotherapy
so that you will be a leper to food.

And give Me your soldiers, your brave soldiers
of your immune system, your white blood cells
from the tribe Neutrophil and Lymphocyte
give them to Me, your Chemotherapy
so that you will know how fragile you are.

Give these, your most prized possessions, to Me
amid incense of rubbing alcohol
upon an altar of reclining chair.

In return, I shall smite your enemy
the cancer, cause of suffering and death.
I, and no scalpel; I, and no x-ray.
I will poison the primary tumor
and his children and his children's children
throughout your flesh, in every hiding place.
Their cytoplasm will run in your veins!
I will destroy them all, without mercy
so that you will know bad happens to good
in order for worse to happen to bad.

So did the Chemotherapy declare.
And the follow-up CT scan was good.

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Illustration by Jim M'Guinness.

*A Vision in
the Infusion
Suite*

