

A retired physician

A career spent attending to others,
unworldly and seemingly devoid
of any hobbies or great adventures.
For decades you would solemnly
listen to your patients' heart and lungs,
a long-married couple sharing a house
but sleeping in separate rooms,
trying to make sense
of what its owner was feeling
and what you heard.

Sometimes quashing hopes
of distant plans when reality
counseled a shortened calendar.
The romance of grandly traveling
the world now has to settle
for tentatively navigating a few steps.
Upstairs and downstairs cordoned off,
a lifetime of curated exhibits
no longer relevant
to the current patron's diminished mien.

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rediscovers wonder

Daily mood of ever-present anxiety,
wondering what could go wrong
with each patient under your care.
Staying with many of them until the lights
went out and they vacated
the body's home. Sometimes downplaying
and minimizing accumulating deficits,
they would call you, like a handyman,
hoping you could somehow prolong
body parts that don't come with a warranty.

The labs, studies, and phone calls
are someone else's responsibility
you think, startled by an inpatient driver's horn,
driving home in the summer twilight
in awe of the surrounding grasses,
trees, clouds, and stars that you never bothered
to learn more about, committing to take a class
with the professors of wonder—elementary school children—
learning about local wetlands you didn't know existed
and what other discoveries await these last years.

—Joseph Geskey, DO

Illustration by Eleeza Palmer

