

POEM

Swapping the chairs

Once in a while
It is helpful to be *there*
On that plain chair
right across the cluttered desk Where the
patient usually sits ...

How do *you* feel? Perfectly at ease at heart
Or uneasy with a foreboding?
Does *your* heart flutter
at the thought of the *news*?

The doctor is right there
his eyes bright with compassion and years
of painstaking wisdom He knows it *all*
For he has seen and read *them* ...

He has something to say?
To break a capsule of news and release the
pungent truth!
Whatever has been lurking in the dark is
emerging from the shadows ...

It feels too hot in there though it's quite
cool outside
Moments feel like unending days
The silence overwhelming
that needs to be broken, finally ...

Is it better to put it straight to him without
the futile prevarication?
'*Would I live or die*'
Knowing is painful
But feigned ignorance isn't blissful, either!

Let us get the good news out first
The systems aren't perfect
But they're performing their duties Which
is certainly a positive thing!
But ... but ... The bad news is ...

Why does stammering silence break in,
punctuating the serious conversation?
There *is* something to worry about
His eyes bestow a kinder look
Why is it so painful like piercing glass?

Is he pretending to be nicer as though I
won't bear it?
The room suddenly starts to spin
The information storms into the ears,
inside which wolves start howling!

He has mentioned the *word*,
The most sinister word known to
humankind, It is there, for sure!
Don't know for how long it has been there
Or how long I've got left in my life ...

Tears sprout in the eyes without invitation
The room has gone dark and gloomy
though it is spring outside the window He is
carefully slicing the words

Keeping the jargon out of the talk ...

He talks about the *evidence*
and the evolving medical wonders
He checks that I am receptive
able to handle the flux of information
And most vitally, *he lets me talk!*

I'm full of shock and disbelief as if hit by a
monstrous truck!
However, I'm able to vent my thoughts
though distraught and chaotic
He *listens*, so patiently he *listens* ...

We can set this right, he says soothingly
He gives me *hope*

The most priceless and rare gift
for one to soldier on and fight back
As if we've signed a pact of
solidarity together!

It is going to get busy
It is going to be painful and daunting
I ought to garner all the support
that a human being can possibly do,
And he *will* guide me through the journey ...

The journey has just begun
The world appears to be eerily different,
suddenly shattered like an earthen pot!
But in times of crisis, trust counts the most
The faith in humanity, and the power
of medicine ...

There is a hesitant knock on the door
The room settles back to reality
I am in the doctor's chair, again!
No longer am I *the patient*
Sometimes dreams can feel all too real!

The *real* patient is going to step in
Unfortunately I've bad news to deliver,
with compassion, respect and love

I've to re-enact the patient myself
To be the candle light of hope, in darkness ...

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