

Two Poems

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HOSPITAL CHAPLAIN

Chaplain,
as I rush from patient room
to patient room,
sprinkle me with the dust
that allows one to sit
for long moments,
silently, with another.
I am exhausted attempting to outrun
the predators Emotion and Guilt.
I need to be present.

Chaplain, how do we treat you?
Do you feel respected, or
simply overlooked
like so many on the “team”?
Called off the bench when
we starters have once again
failed against a mightier opponent ...
“Here, your turn, you finish ...”

Chaplain, do you ever dream
of trading
your white collar
for my white coat?
Longing not for other abilities,
but for lesser burdens?

HOUSEKEEPING

You hear the sobbing
before the clinical staff
are remotely aware.
Patients held captive by fear and loneliness;
you acknowledge their presence
without power differentials—
person to person.
You remind me of our hospital unit’s MVP
when I was an intern:
“Clara the Cleaning Lady,”
the wisest, most gentle
member of our team.

Memories of her goodness
continue to inspire me.

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