

answers. We search for solutions. All of us, together.

The curtains close and open again with my back to the audience. The computer screen with your words is visible to all. Updates come from you and about you. Preoperative, postoperative. Rehabilitation. This clinic and that ward, home to stretcher to hospital bed and back home. So many new characters, all interpreting the story. Your story. Complications and successes and visits. The scenes repeat. The words of the current letters are similar: *Admitted for complication. Treated. Released home in stable condition.*

I am offstage now. You are still there, lying restfully in bed. It is not until more than a week later that I receive another report, arriving like any other. *Admitted*

for complication. Treated. Passed away peacefully in the arms of his wife.

The stage is dark, save for a white light shining on you both, the darkened silhouettes of your family surrounding you in a semicircle. The single light dims and extinguishes. The curtains slowly close.

The audience is silent and still.

There is a murmur, a rustle of denial at first, but rumbling louder, growing to anger of what and who and why. The rage simmers to a din. No bargain will erase what has been written.

Outside the theatre, the sky is cloudy and the air bites unprotected ears. Very few move, despite the drizzle settling on us. Faces wet from rain. Faces wet from tears. We look down. Shuffle our feet. Try to understand.

One day we will accept that there is no more reason to be sad. We will realize that we hurt because we care so much. The wounds of imperfections and impotence will slowly heal, but the scars will be forever there, reminding us of your story, the one that taught us that there is so much more to gain when the spotlight shines on those we hold dear.

You were, are and will always be the star.

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This is a true story. The protagonist's wife has given her consent for publication.

CMAJ 2014. DOI:10.1503/cmaj.131276

POETRY

ST depression

How do I explain
to my daughter
that I missed her concert
by two millimetres?
A subtle bend,
caught late as my thoughts
were leaving to join violins
tuning somewhere outside
these sterile walls.
But you brought me back:
your flinch, the gasp,
a dip in the green lines
scrolling onscreen
above your head.
Those two millimetres
changed our trajectories:
you hit the cath lab,
I missed the concert.
And now that I've
told your family
all about it,
how do I tell mine?

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CMAJ 2014. DOI:10.1503/cmaj.140088



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