

# MIND TO MIND

*Creative writing that explores the abstract side  
of our profession and our lives*

*Carol Wiley Cassella, M.D., Editor*

## Endurance

Mark J. Lenart, M.D.\*

On call in a distant land – where battles rage, and faith, family, and friends  
seem so far.

The pager beeps – an incoming casualty.

Down to the trauma bay.

He arrives on a stretcher. Nameless.

Blood. Dirt. Mangled flesh.

Where feet should be...nothing.

Trauma shears do their work to expose bone stripped of flesh.

Another soldier...patient...victim – like so many others.

And yet.

Our eyes meet.

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He speaks, but I cannot hear. I move closer.

“When they cut off my legs, will I be asleep?”

Air rushes from my lungs.

I cannot breathe.

I struggle to reply. His eyes implore me to answer.

“Yes, of course,” I hear myself say.

Tears fall as I stroke his head.

“Tell me your name, son”.

He does. His final words to me.

And so it is, just as he knew it would be.

Day turns to night, which gives way to Dawn.

As I leave, I check my watch.

He will awaken to a different life - full of challenges.

I breathe a prayer for him.

For strength.

For acceptance. For his family.

For hope.