

# MIND TO MIND

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

*Stephen T. Harvey, M.D., Editor*

## Worlds Apart

James M. Berry, M.D.

It seems so simple – the white syringe  
the blue pill – like flipping  
a switch, reality interrupted...  
suddenly inert, apneic, flaccid;  
A new world now, dreamless, where

time is fluid, static, gone...  
Tones pulse, pulses turn, faint,  
erratic, quickly slowing, showing signs of  
response to random twinge on  
a distant horizon of perception

How can it feel to live, immersed in  
a world opposite life – is it death?  
or pseudo-death, with the throb of Pandora  
on distant speaker, adding rhythm  
to the vent's sigh and drill's climax  
over static hiss of blood and air.

We natives here are invisible, forgettable  
slipping along tendrils of consciousness,  
tending, wraith-like, to tasks; slick stagehands  
from the Truman Show, almost real  
or hypnogogic dream?

Oh, you shall never see our world  
or, should you glimpse it, never remember...  
How could you ever know us, in our  
sterile universe of cling-wrapped tech,  
where you can only sleep, and we,  
just beyond your grasp, never do...

From the Department of Anesthesiology and Pain Management, University of Texas Southwestern School of Medicine, Dallas, Texas. james.berry@utsouthwestern.edu

Accepted for publication January 31, 2018.

Permission to reprint granted to the American Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc., and Wolters Kluwer Health, Inc., by copyright author/owner. Anesthesiology 2018; 129:218