

MIND TO MIND

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

Stephen T. Harvey, M.D., Editor

scrubbing out

Kacper Niburski, M.A.

m my patient just died and i am now outside the or and i hear the family crying behind the white walls and moments before my white hands had held her white hands and i kept saying you are going to breathe and you are going to breathe and you are going to breathe and when i was 16 i got into a horrible accident that still stutters my step and the impact i felt then of the glass cutting new words into my mouth and the pavement rousing my skin was less than the pressure i crushed into her failing chest for she was going to breathe and she hugged me before the operation with softness and she said she was nervous like a newborn cloud on a summer's day and to calm her down i showed her a picture of my cat who breathed a meow and i transitioned to my dog who breathed a bark and she laughed with all the breath that had ever been breathed in this tiny terrifying place and she asked me if my pets would love to run around like mad in this hospital and i am now outside the or where my patient just died and the lights ooze into the night and the mop weeps onto the floor and some torn miscellaneous hairs curl on the cradle of my scrubs and a palm sinks into my shoulder to tell me that i did a good job assisting the code and by the way one of my patients from the early morning wants to talk about increasing their pain medications and i pass by the family still crying and crying and crying and i stutter back home with my shadow lagging behind only to see a cat and dog there patiently sitting, silently breathing, waiting to run madly alive outside.