

Inside - Out: The Cancer Cauldron

Dizzy nausea
Drifts in and out of twenty minute diarrhea,
Meticulous incontinence on the oncology ward.

White jacketed umpires call the shots
Morning and evening,
"She should come out of this anytime,"
"It's just a reaction to the chemo."

Days ... worsen ... into weeks.
Beyond all expectation,
Gray pain rusts away hope.

Tea and bullion, tea and bullion.....
While plastic hoses on dripping time machines
Gather at the vigil.

"What day is it?"

Weakness spins in and out of sleep
While despair signals the call for action:
"I just want to die,"
"Let me out of here."

Sedation – the umpires' restraint,
Strikes out the motion,
Isolating intent.

Misery in paralysis – Waiting.

Outside the cancer curtain
Watching,
Attending
In the silent witness chair.

Overseeing the passing potted plants,
Up and down and out for the lavatory rush,
Cajoling the cherry ice - down,
Marshaling perspective for the pillow.

Talking improvement,
Expecting improvement,
The angry limbo of "about the same."

"Did those fools give her the wrong chemo dose?"
Not knowingwhy?
"It just isn't fair."

The fuse shortens around the watchers,
Frustration, sorrow, sympathy, self-pity, bewilderment,
The cycle of suffering
On the outside.

Hope in paralysis – Waiting.

Finally,
Notice of change.....
For the better!
Tears explode through the announced smile.
Sobs of breath held in reserve
Penetrate control
And shock with their presence.

A shaking, quivering chest
Looks away, out the window
As silent arms of marriage
Close around from behind
And hold,

Being There.

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