

HUMANITIES

Missed goodbyes

Laura A Schep BAS, MBS¹

¹Class of 2017, Faculty of Medicine, Dalhousie University

missed goodbyes

it seems weird to me that just the other day
it mattered so much that i know your electrolyte values and heart sounds
whether you had chest pain and if you were still using the bathroom
but now everything is different
no one mentions your name
yet i'm still back in that place where it all matters
and i want to know

when i left the hospital last night to go home to my family
i accidentally lied to yours and said i'd see them in the morning
it turned out not to be true though i believed it at the time
i guess we all say that sometimes while never having any guarantee

when i came back this morning a new name was on our list
where yours used to be
and the cleaners were polishing the floor in your room
getting it ready for the next patient
how strange it was that all of a sudden you were gone
and there was no mention of you
until i asked

i'm told you looked comfortable
when you left us last night
and i'm so glad you had your family by your side
i was teased affectionately for being sad when you got really sick
one of the doctors told me never to lose the compassion i showed you
while others assured me one day i will

in some ways i think it would be okay to not feel so much
for patients like you who will inevitably come and go so often during my work days
it is hard to care about so many people that keep leaving us
on the other hand I have found
that caring genuinely for people has been one of the best things
about being alive
thank you for reminding me of this

goodbye alice