I watched the rain from the hospital window - glass droplets hatching into tiny silver minnows - streaking against the grey sky. In my hand, a small bunch of wild flowers, their bitter sweetness quietly blotting out the artificial sterility of the room.

It had been three months since my mentor had fallen ill; but even with the constant shuffling of doctors and nurses, the whirring of the machines and medications, I still tried to make light of the situation. We called it Berger’s disease, and him, patient zero, that the doctors would miraculously engineer a cure.

I put the flowers in a glass vase by the window. The rain was already beginning to clear, the sun trickling into soft pools of light.

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I had known Nate for many years, the teacher who had always been a guiding hand - the definition of “sage”, a man of boundless knowledge and inspiration, but also vivid curiosity and creativity.

He was larger than life, literally and figuratively. He had carried almost the entire medical community on his shoulders for decades, working tirelessly as professor and mentor – a monument of an era. But he was also someone who could, without any semblance of a doubt, pass off Santa Claus, with his snow-white puffy beard and jovial and hearty laugh.

Arranging the flowers, I