I Am *Only* A Medical Student

I am only but a *student* of medicine

Cannot prescribe the pills that may cure him

A Mr. G, wheeled into the emergency

A sixty something, altered mentally

The resident and I march towards the unknown

She leads the way, I *observe* his worrisome knowns

He had a large, anxious family, accompanying him

‘Must feel nice’, I mumble fondly within

*My team* gets to solving the pressing puzzle

Joining the dots, looking for the final nuzzle

Voila! Cancer ‘mets’ and anti-anxiety meds

The rust behind his thinking valves and jets

Brilliant minds have done it yet again

The family, though, is at loss of a gain

They can’t help but see, the distorted expression

His inability to speak, the pain, the frustration!

He lies there fighting this new-found delirium

His stare reminiscent of an empty aquarium

His wife is there, she wouldn’t shed a tear

‘We stay strong, is what he would’ve held dear’

His daughters, inconsolable-

Perhaps missing their father’s laugh

Replaced by incoherent groans and wheezes

That escape his twisted body, alas

And me? What could *I* possiblydo?

I am only but a *student* of medicine

Cannot prescribe- yet-

The pills that may cure him

I flounder restlessly, even though he doesn’t worsen

The medicines were treating the disease, not the person

I betrayed my passivity and I do what I know

I can listen and talk, and then listen some more

What seems easy, has twined in their minds

I give them my time, leaving no questions behind

Each day is new, full of queries and challenges

Some days looking bright, others staggering balances

Time and patience, educate the family

Love and compassion, restore humanity

This is every day now, like a righteous calling

Until George’s consciousness claws back slowly

There are tears, there is joy, as this family furls

He mumbles his wife’s name and then his girls’

He sees me for the first time, puzzled I believe

But I know him well, and I feel the upheave

The wife and daughters hug me, their defenses crush

Weeping inconsolably, as their tears rush

Touched, I speak, almost spinally,

I am only but a *student* of medicine

*Did not* prescribe the pills that cured him

She replied softly that left me humbled,

‘You did much more, you didn’t let us crumble’

I could palpate that feeling, my defenses fissuring

Tears rolling down as bodies commissuring

Those tears were cognizance of the process of healing

It’s never just the pills, it’s a bigger dealing

I will prescribe someday, if it may be destined

But will never lose sight of true healing’s pristine

For I am not *only* the student of Medicine

But the medicine, that will heal him

I will remember that there is art to medicine as well as science, and that warmth, sympathy and understanding may outweigh the surgeon’s knife or the chemist’s drug

- Hippocrates