

Four Men, Sitting.

I pause for a moment
and look up
from your chart,
the litany of your final night,
the litany I am authoring.

They are four men, sitting.

I watch them
watching you:
father,
uncle,
godfather,
and friend in faith.

Faces lined with worry,
eyes red with fatigue,
lips moving in prayer,
they sit in a line
beside your bed.

I watch them
watching you.
Their love for you
is palpable,
it fills this room,
fills my world.

At the center of my world,
lays the center of their world: you,
a child surrounded
and dwarfed
by the equipment that keeps your heart beating.

Your picture smiles down
upon a boy
who no longer looks
like you.

Your bed is filled with toys
your little brother sent
to help you feel better.

I have placed
each toy
with care:
a truck
to hold heavy tubing in place,
a spaceship
to keep your hand curled
in its natural form.

They are four men, sitting.

I sit,
watching them,
watching you.

They watch the rise
and fall
of your chest,
driven by a machine.

They watch the urine
pour relentlessly
from your body
through a tube.

They watch the drain
in your head
that cannot help you:
it is clogged, useless.

They watch the monitor
shifting numbers
they are quickly learning
to understand,
as all families do here.

The numbers and waveforms
tell your grim story
and fate.
Each night
I have fought to bend
those numbers
into a different story.

Each night,
these four men have held your hand
and stroked your hair
and prayed to change your fate.

Each night,
without fail,
they have brought their
breaking hearts
to your bedside.

Each night,
they have asked me
not to cease
in my efforts to save you,
and until this moment
I have not.

This moment is different.

This moment
I felt the change.

Now, I have ceased
fighting to save
your life.

Now I fight
to pass your life on.

Now I fight to give
these four hearts
and all the other
loving hearts
that surround you
the time and peace to say
goodbye.

Tomorrow,
I will rest,
no longer intervening,
no longer writing
of each care filled act.

Tomorrow,
the final evidence
will be gathered
that you have already said
goodbye.

Tomorrow,
someone else will live,
someone else will see,
someone else will grow,
because of the gift
of your life
and your family's love.

Tomorrow,
only a few moments away.

The last few moments
of your six years.

I have so much to do, still.

So many tiny details,
a string of moments
and acts
that will turn your life
into many.

But for a moment,
just one moment,
one bright, frail moment,
we are five men, sitting
with you.

Scott Chisholm Lamont, RN.
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