



Murmurs

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Poet's note: As medical students, we tend to see patients only from the point of view of learning from them. However, patients have their own set of struggles, which we often fail to recognize. This poem explores the challenges faced by a patient in a medical college hospital, and aims to inspire empathy in the minds of medical students.

"We can't afford this, Raj," I said, holding in my tears.
"I'll take care of you, Shanti. Let go of your fears."
"Did you sell the house?" a pregnant pause,
as fifteen 'doctors' made their way across.

"Breathlessness, fainting and chest pain,"
I repeated tiredly for the hundredth time again.
My head throbbed; I hadn't slept for days.
Four pm; my stomach grumbled in a million different ways.

The fifteen wide-eyed white-coated figures surrounded me.
They stared at my face, my chest, my stomach, even at my knee.
"She's in failure," one 'doctor' casually did remark.
"This is the best murmur I've ever heard," another said with a spark.

"I'm hungry," I murmured meekly, in absolute dread.
"If you check again, she has a heave!" a white-coat said.
I wondered which was colder - the 'doctors', deaf to my only behest,
or the six stethoscopes crowded over my naked chest.

They saw the pallor in my eyes, but not the tears,
The murmurs in my heart, but not a hint of its fears.
No longer was I Shanti; I was 'the best case ever'.
They knew all about my problem; yet my problems were a blur.

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Fifteen more 'doctors' arrived, as at my lunchbox I did pick.
I pulled my blanket up; I was feeling very sick.
"But this is an amazing case. Why won't she let us look?"
"It's a pity she's uncooperative," their heads they shook.

"Doctor, I'm afraid...I'm not feeling too well.
What's happening to me? I can't understand. Pray tell!"
"I have thirty more patients. Can't you see?
Just have a little trust and leave the rest to me."

From the fortress of my eyes escaped a solitary tear.
I prayed quietly, hoping that the end was near.
To heal my heart, I'd come this far; when,
in fact, now it just felt even more broken...

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