



DNAR

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When I die, just let me die,
don't put in any tubes or pipes.
Don't push in breaths against my will
and food through punctures in my skin.
Don't wait for me to open my eyes.
Don't ask them when, how, and whys.
Don't dare drug me to paralyze.
Don't undress me if in peace I lie.

Let death be my final wish.
Let ours be my final kiss.

A lifetime of grace - honoured, admired,
a 'vegetable' - isn't how I want to be retired.
Don't let yourself suffer any more,
it'll never be the same again, I'm sure.
As I choose my kind of grave,
you could choose to be brave.
Let grief wound you once or twice -
don't let it be your way of life.
So, no hospice - when the time is near!
I've chosen to be at home, my dear.

Poet's note: DNAR stands for 'Do Not Attempt Resuscitation' which indicates that a person does not want to receive cardiopulmonary resuscitation or advanced medical care at the end of life when, in the specific case, the patient believes it may do more harm than good. I wrote this poem after one of my shifts in intensive care. Indian patients have the 'right to die with dignity' - consensus guidelines were announced by ICMR in May, 2020. This is a historic milestone in the field of palliative medicine and end of life care.

Reference: Mathur R. ICMR Consensus Guidelines on 'Do Not Attempt Resuscitation'. Indian J Med Res. 2020;151:303-10.

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