

MIND TO MIND

*Creative writing that explores the abstract side
of our profession and our lives*

Carol Wiley Cassella, M.D., Editor

Count Backwards from 10

Richard L. Saupé, M.D.*

T
TEN...
fingers and toes,
each one anxiously awaiting its turn
in the pulse oximeter...

Nine...
centimeters of Touhy,
before reaching the hub
and delicately asking for a more robust needle...

Eight...
liters per minute,
via the ambu bag,
en route to the ICU...

Seven...
French triple-lumen catheter,
when peripheral IV access
just isn't doing the job...

Six...
percent Desflurane,
to ensure limitation of movement
at 50% of incisions...

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Five...
electrocardiogram leads,
to diagnose, trend, and treat
precordial ischemia...

Four...
vital capacity breaths,
to denitro-, and preoxy-
genate the lungs...

Three...
bispectral index leads,
sprawling across the forehead
keeping awareness to a minimum...

Two...
arms, legs, and eyes,
padded, protected
and positioned for safety...

One...
patient,
sleeping comfortably
and painlessly on the table.