

MIND TO MIND

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

Carol Wiley Cassella, M.D., Editor

Kolkata 67, Night and Day

George H. Kendall, M.A.

Train, its horn a descending major second,
down a half step -- Doppler effect --
and opportunistic caws harmonize above
a solitary walking man
who blows a tinny whistle,
its tones rise and fall
and fade into a rumbling calm,
exploded by roaming dog packs,
growling primal over space,
unlit alleys their territories.
Drunken consciousness yawns,
and inspires a thought after dreams,
inaccessible now,
sequestered somewhere in this place,
but a warning echo from afar
brings a charged blast,
this time a minor seventh,
chords running on the tracks:
it's dawn.

Bright haze smolders
and faces radiate emotions,
joys and frustrations, a smile or frown

From Chandler, Arizona. g.kendall@asahq.org

Accepted for publication May 29, 2014.

Copyright © 2014, the American Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc. Lippincott Williams & Wilkins. Anesthesiology 2014; 121:1345-6

envelops clusters of arms, dishes, hair, laundry,
 bare feet jostle under a single tap,
 baskets sag; ceaseless cars nearby.
 The scent of cardamom and cloves,
 incense and peppered oil sizzles,
 burns eyes to tears,
 pools of blood and feathers
 bartered over by layered fabrics:
 magenta, copper, sapphire, gold, and skin and dust,
 blend on a canvas resistant to interpretation,
 but distant bells ring with conch shell invocations,
 and determined crows find scraps,
 and half-wild dogs sleep
 in dirt, weeds, on cement -- anywhere --
 exhausted and indifferent, starving,
 while a meandering cow, oblivious,
 chews grass.

Coal-stained structures,
 brushed with faded colors,
 a pastel from forgotten times
 lived in for generations, reverberate
 an infant's cry, youthful flirtations,
 and, frail, sooty coughs.
 Men call,
 selling newspapers, milk, or fruit, door to door.
 While listening,
 absorb the sweetness of young coconuts
 and summon the thought:
 Absurdity? Truth and beauty? A mockery?
 Indefinable projections cycle in an afternoon reverie
 and dreams touch all that is possible.
 It's almost the best sleep for man.
 But sometime after
 a jarring tritone stirs dissonance
 and a vision:
 across the road
 through a dappled crumble in bricks,
 beads of water,
 and a tangle of vines and petals,
 Blossoms.