

# MIND TO MIND

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

*Carol Wiley Cassella, M.D., Editor*

## Day 6

Elizabeth Baker, M.D.

Sometimes he dances in the kitchen and I laugh  
He sneaks a bite of what will be dinner and he  
Turns on a heel fairly skipping out the door  
Never mind the aging knees, never mind the callouses  
That cover his palms or the thinning of his hair.  
He is a boy. A child. A mischief maker, a thief,  
Begging me to catch him, to raise my voice  
In mock anger and to bat his hand away  
Because it isn't time for whatever he's wanting...

He wants, he always wants. Looking for a treat  
A snack, a kiss even. A release. He's not content  
To wait on anyone, not content to learn an ounce of patience  
And he doesn't see the value in any delay. His is a life of nows.

And now, now we wait for him, settling into uncertainty.  
Luxuriating in each breath, each heartbeat saying that wasn't the end of it.  
While he sleeps, while he lies so still, so deeply unaware,  
While his blood (his blood? Is it still his blood? With so much spilled and  
So much given, the blood of 60 people now flows through his heart)  
It feeds and nourishes and hopes to beat the devil in his guts  
That has tried his meager patience for all of his life,  
What is going through that quiet brain,  
So slow, so still for once in all his days?  
What is he slowly, carefully thinking, when  
There are no muscles he can move,

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No blinking eyes,  
No sighs or hiccups to punctuate his breathing,  
Just a steady 12-breaths-per-minute dialed onto that machine.  
Has the stillness lead to an epiphany?  
Does his brilliance, does his essence, rely on that frenetic movement  
That surrounds him, defines him?  
Does he dream?

I do.  
In all my vital, rueful wakefulness  
I do.

I dream, with eyes wide open,  
Stiffly standing by his side  
I dream that his eyes will open  
I dream that he will look at me and  
He will crack a slow smile  
And he will say to me “I dreamt of dancing in the kitchen, and your laugh.”