

MIND TO MIND

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

Carol Wiley Cassella, M.D., Editor

The Add-on

Matthew David McEvoy, M.D.

Wednesday afternoon, 5 PM.
Ugh, the proverbial add-on.

Patient is a 4yo WF, 24kg, NKDA
3d h/o constipation, distension, pain, dyspnea.
CT revealed large mediastinal mass, tracheal deviation, large left pleural
effusion, large abdominal mass.
Lethargic. SOB, requiring supplemental O₂.
Sao₂ 92%. Tachycardic. BP low-normal.
Lytes nml, Cr 1.1, hgb 9.1

*Ansley Faith, youngest of five children. Had
a tummy ache at school. Didn't want her
lunch. Mommy picked her up early. Met daddy
in the emergency room.
Enemas, crying, pain.
No real answers, just really bad news.
Scared. So are her parents.
"I don't want my little girl to die," her daddy says.*

Pt in Preop. PIV in place.
Needs port, left chest tube, and LN bx for definitive diagnosis
to decide on chemo. "Should be quick."
Dad comes to OR with her. "We've got her.
Everything will be fine." Dad leaves.
Drugs, ETT, surgery.

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*Waiting room heavy.
Parents and siblings and community anxious.
Eyes crying and speaking in silence.*

Emergence. Patient in PACU.
VSS. HR normal. BP normal. SaO₂ 99%.

“Thanks for taking care of her.”

“You’ve got a long road ahead. I guess
you’ll be taking some time off work? Need me to
cover your call on Monday?”

She is sleeping. Breathing easier.
I know the details of what she has been through.
I feel her pulse.
I watch her breathe.
I hate cancer.
I love Ansley Faith, my sweet little girl.