

MIND TO MIND

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



Stephen T. Harvey, M.D., Editor

Worlds Apart

James M. Berry, M.D.

It seems so simple – the white syringe
the blue pill – like flipping
a switch, reality interrupted...
suddenly inert, apneic, flaccid;
A new world now, dreamless, where

time is fluid, static, gone...
Tones pulse, pulses turn, faint,
erratic, quickly slowing, showing signs of
response to random twinge on
a distant horizon of perception

How can it feel to live, immersed in
a world opposite life – is it death?
or pseudo-death, with the throb of Pandora
on distant speaker, adding rhythm
to the vent's sigh and drill's climax
over static hiss of blood and air.

We natives here are invisible, forgettable
slipping along tendrils of consciousness,
tending, wraith-like, to tasks; slick stagehands
from the Truman Show, almost real
or hypnagogic dream?

Oh, you shall never see our world
or, should you glimpse it, never remember...
How could you ever know us, in our
sterile universe of cling-wrapped tech,
where you can only sleep, and we,
just beyond your grasp, never do...

From the Department of Anesthesiology and Pain Management, University of Texas Southwestern School of Medicine, Dallas, Texas. james.berry@utsouthwestern.edu

Accepted for publication January 31, 2018.

Permission to reprint granted to the American Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc., and Wolters Kluwer Health, Inc., by copyright author/owner. Anesthesiology 2018; 129:218