

# MIND TO MIND

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

*Stephen T. Harvey, M.D., Editor*

## Vanishing Point

Maxine Susman

**T**hink of O’Keeffe’s painting in blacks and grays  
the legend beneath telling how anesthesia pulled her under  
so what she saw she could no longer see—just a black dot  
waiting at the end of the tunnel. Say the Holland Tunnel  
when we drove through at 3 AM racing a blizzard,  
the only car. Our beams fixed on the distant circle,  
and then we surfaced in Jersey City to snow-smear light  
and regained our place names, sought lanes leading home.  
I see this while we talk about what you will feel like  
when you have the surgery. “When.” “If you have to,”  
and that leads us to think of losing ability to think  
when the body is loosening from its usual pinnings—  
moorings. Lessenings. Floating under,  
period of the sentence when no words will follow,  
neither to continue nor remonstrate nor assent.  
O’Keeffe concocted a searing white titanium,  
the white-out speck in the center, cold-hot pinprick  
in the heart of color. Empty field. Blinding white. Period.

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