

MIND TO MIND

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

Stephen T. Harvey, M.D., Editor

Judas and the Magnetic Resonance

Bill McCabe

He tells me to hold her down, to pin her arms
tightly against her sides and lean myself
across her legs. I do as I'm instructed
and he holds the hissing mask over her nose

and mouth. She looks up at me. Her eyes are flooding.
She's not quite two and her sobbing helps ensure
she'll breathe in deep the anesthesia. When
she's still, they'll start the imaging of her brain.

I'm here because she trusts me most to keep her
safe. She struggles hard against my hold
learning her first lesson about betrayal.
She's screaming *Daddy!*, pleading for me to stop.

She kicks hard at my ribs so I lean more heavily
upon her. I can smell the gas she's breathing—like candy—
and then she stops, her breathing slows, her eyes
roll up inside her head and she slumps, open-mouthed

and limp, in my tensed arms. Thirty pounds
of inert weight the tech slides easily into
position inside the chamber of the machine.
I'm escorted from the buzzing room, but

before I go I make sure I see her chest rise,
her chest fall. I sit down on a folding chair
out in the hall. The technician tells me, smiling,
You did real good in there, Dad.

This poem is one of the finalists of ANESTHESIOLOGY's 2018 annual creative writing competition, The Letheon. wmcc1112@gmail.com

Permission to reprint granted to the American Society of Anesthesiologists, Inc., and Wolters Kluwer Health, Inc., by copyright author/owner. *Anesthesiology* 2019; 130:850