

# MIND TO MIND

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

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

## Alarm Fatigue

Jefferson Dryden, D.O.

The room was small  
where we first met.

Fluorescent bulbs above  
droned their dull hum.  
An alto timbre warbled from the  
corridor at my back,  
and near-avian chirps  
crooned from the ventilator  
as it cycled in support –  
somewhere between loon &  
whip-poor-will.

A susurrant of roller pumps  
muted by line pressure caterwauls,  
joined the plummeting pitch of oximetry  
and all coalesced  
into a confusing cacophony  
of misery too familiar –

one that beckoned my focus  
and heralded quietus.

Downloaded from [http://pubs.asahq.org/anesthesiology/article-pdf/138/4/442/683628/20230400\\_0-00019.pdf](http://pubs.asahq.org/anesthesiology/article-pdf/138/4/442/683628/20230400_0-00019.pdf) by guest on 29 March 2023

Accepted for publication January 10, 2023. Published online first on February 2, 2023.

Jefferson Dryden, D.O.: The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio. [jefferson.dryden@osumc.edu](mailto:jefferson.dryden@osumc.edu)

Permission to reprint granted to the American Society of Anesthesiologists by copyright author/owner. *Anesthesiology* 2023; 138:442–3. DOI: 10.1097/ALN.0000000000004499

We stood, unnaturally,  
Your husband nested  
between beige bed rails.  
Your hand held his,  
mine cupped a stethoscope –  
  
heard silence.