

The Human Heart

Penny Gray-Allan Memorial Submission

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THE HUMAN HEART

A bird's eye view of an emergency department
Is like an ant-hill: teamwork, bustle.
The foundation composed not of sand
But our heart muscle. It never stops beating.

Flies on the wall see this muscle.
See shifts so busy they seem endless.
Never busy enough to give an extra meal to Stan.
Stan is homeless. The heart warms.

Maybe this is his only meal today.
A tumor is seen on a CT. The heart sinks.
It's Derek, the 76-year-old who remembered my
name.
Now I have to think.

Think about how to be gentle in talking about
cancer.

Is it possible? A tough feat.
But I will sit on his bed and not stand at the curtain.
The heart skips a beat.

Somebody's mother Ruth; her heart stopped. Arrest.
The monotone of asystole.
Running the code is driven by belief
Of Ruth once again speaking to her family.

In an emergency department, the heart never stops
beating.

One stops, another begins. Irrespective of our role.
Whether we be patient or doctor, it's a muscle that
drives us
To care from our soul.

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