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poems  
by  
doctors

## These are the Stories Doctors Tell

Jonathan Knight

These are the stories doctors tell:  
The Christmas gift, the troubled gaze,  
The cognitive decline of age,  
The family rift, the loss of sight,  
The ones who lived, and those who might,  
The dying and the worried well;  
These are the stories doctors tell.

And these are the patients doctors know:  
The tired and anxious, the slow, the lame  
The ones that never go away,  
The bright, the angry malcontent,  
The addict and the one that's sent,  
The garrulous, and those brought low;  
These are the patients doctors know.

And these are the moments doctors fear:  
The unexplained, the shadowed lung,  
The relative who asks: "How long?"  
The purple rash, traumatic birth,  
The contemplation of our worth:  
Examinations that draw near.  
These are the moments doctors fear.

And these are the journeys doctors make:  
The drone of dusty lecture halls,  
The teaching round, the nights on-call;  
Uncertainties and things un-said,  
The visit to the hospice bed.  
That one mistake. That touch of grace.  
These are the journeys doctors make.

Jonathan Knight works as a general practitioner in Ipswich and co-organises an annual reflective writing workshop for GPs. The poem was selected by Femi Oyeboode. Published in *The Hippocrates Prize Anthology* (Commended Poem, NHS category), Hippocrates Press, 2012. © Jonathan Knight. Reprinted with permission.

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