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Poems  
by  
doctors

## Psychiatrists on the Subway

Ron Charach

One rarely spots psychiatrists on the subway  
rubbing the haze of a long day's sessions  
from their lean temples,  
or thumbing through paperbacks that deal  
with anything-but.  
Wouldn't they like an update on who's  
In the world and how they're doing?

Or would the ridership be wary of men and women  
whose briefcases rattle with the *tic tac*  
of pills, whose ears perk  
like armadillos' at conversations  
two seats over?  
More likely we locate them in a bad joke,  
in a wing-chair beside a firm couch,  
a suicide statistic, a product seminar  
with deli sandwiches courtesy of Pfizer or Roche  
or Eli Lilly;  
perhaps on the beach of a convention hotel  
with a panorama of thong-clad beauties  
who seldom talk revealingly

Before bed a psychiatrist sets his ears  
on the night-table  
and prays for a night of long silence  
from a god who prefers  
to listen.

Ron Charach was born in Winnipeg, Canada. He studied medicine in Toronto and trained in psychiatry in New York. He has lived in Toronto since 1980. The two poems are from *Selected Portraits*. Hamilton, Wolsak & Wynn Publishers. Another of Charach's poems was published in the September 2008 issue of the *Journal*.

Poem selected by Femi Oyeboode.

The British Journal of Psychiatry (2009)  
195, 155. doi: 10.1192/bjp.195.2.155