

Rounding | *Alexandre Y. Poppe, MDCM*

(Round 1)

white coated angels swarm down
the hammer they wield, a reaper's scythe
and just as deliberate—
foretelling death
in sleeping men

(Round 2)

he lies between exchanged cacophony
—blaring horns and cars colliding—
words muttered between white coats
like foreign tongues:
shriller than squealing tires
sharper than broken glass

(Round 3)

follow the flow of fluids
in one vein out the other
in the mouth, out the bladder
a placenta of
tubes and wires and half-told lies
to the old man in embryo disguise

(Round 4)

the words are in your eyes:
up for yes
down for no
your arms and legs are locked
lips and tongue are caught
one moment to turn your head
—to dissect your life away—

do we chance your breaths without a tube?
you gaze firmly upwards, seeking the sky:
a searing eloquence that spoken words
would have denied

(Round 5)

the man lies stilled and silenced
by the bleeding in his brain
and despite myself I inflict on him a second violence
primum non nocere
but I pry his eyes apart to shine in them a
glaring light
jolt his head from side to side
thrust torn tissue onto his corneas
flush ice water in his ears
push and pull the tube that lets him breath
exact a deep and deeper pain upon his limbs
all to coax him from a twilight before the night
—all in vain—
these are the ministrations we wish families not to
see
for there is a private shame in performing them
and I can only pray that he is retreated to a place
where he sees, speaks and moves without recourse
to my vulgar provocations

(Round 6)

white coat down to my knees,
they knock together with oscillatory ease
it is my turn now to displease—
succumb, dear man
succumb to your disease

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