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Cube Three

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Cube Three

Abstract
In lieu of an abstract, below is the essay’s first paragraph.

"John, you better pull the back board out. And bring a neck brace, too."

Cover Page Footnote
intercranial pressure builds too much.

Bill, his eyes are pinpointed. No response.

"What for?"

"Just in case. Joe! Get on the other side of this board and help me put him in the back. Come on people! Work with me!"

Wilson Memorial. Wilson Memorial. This is the Owego Squad. We have an automobile accident. Patient is a male Caucaian, middle fifites, medium build, and is suffering from trauma to the head. He is unconscious.

"What's your ETA, Owego?"

"About ten minutes."

"Dr. Burke, report to ER Cube Three. Stat."

"Tinner. Drive me to the Cubes. And step on it!"

"Your patient, Dr. Burke, is suffering injuries to the head as a result of an automobile accident. He suffers symptoms of intercranial pressure and is unconscious. The rest of the pertinent information is coming up on my neck screen."

"Thanks, Tinner. Will I be working with real or synthetic nurses?"

"Cube Three is entirely staffed by Davis units, Dr. Burke."

"Damn robots. Uh...present company excepted. God, I miss real people. Tell the Davis units to administer three cc's of Demerol and to line up a CAT and EEG."

"The message is sent, Dr. Burke. We are now approaching the Cubes. We will arrive at Cube Three momentarily."

"Thanks for the lift, Tinner."

"You're welcome, Dr. Burke."

"Davis One! How soon can we get him into the CAT scanner?"

"Two minutes, Dr. Burke! He's starting to vomit!"

"Help me tilt his back board so he doesn't drown in it! Davis Two! Bring the suction unit over here."

I've got to suck this slop up and make him hyperventilate. He needs oxygen! Davis Four! What's the status on the CAT?"

"Room Two is prepared, Dr. Burke."

"Davis Three! Zap him to CAT Room Two."

"Hello, Jimmy?"

"Hi, Grampa. You wanna play catch with me?"

"Sure! But what are we going to throw—Say Jimmy! What's that behind your ear?"

"Oh, Grampa! There's nothing there."

"Really? Then what's this...baseball doing here?"

"How'd you do that?"

"Why, I saw what we needed and reached for it."

"Then how come I didn't know it was there? I didn't even feel it."

"Well, Jimmy, some people don't know what they need is right close by. Sometimes all you have to do is reach for it."

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Cube Three
by
Thomas Frisk

"John, you better pull the back board out. And bring a neck brace, too."
"How bad is it?"
"He's got ‘coon eyes and bruises behind his ears. We better get him to the hospital before the intercranial pressure builds too much."
"Bill, his eyes are pinpoints. No response."
"Damn. We've got to hurry. Get me the portable suction unit."
"What for?"
"Just in case. Joe! Get on the other side of this board and help me put him in the back. Come on people! Work with me!"

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"Why, I saw what we needed and reached for it."

"Then how come I didn't know it was there? I didn't even feel it."

"Well, Jimmy, some people don't know what they need is right close by. Sometimes all you have to do is reach for it."

"I don't understand, Grampa."
"Don't worry boy. You will. Now throw that ball right in here and show me what you've got."
"He's going on us! Davis One! Give me the plates!"
"The plates as you requested, Doctor."

"Clear!"
"Hello, Jimmy. Who's this pretty young thing?"
"Hi, Grampa. I'd like you to meet my girlfriend Becky. Becky, Grampa."
"Nice to meet you sir."

"Jimmy, did you tell her to call me that? My name's Jack!"
"I'm sorry sir—Jack. I didn't mean to—"

"Don't you worry none about it. I'm just funning with you, little missy."

"Jim, did you tell him to call me that? He told you my name is Becky!"

"She's a keeper, Jimmy."
"I think so."

"So do I, Jack!"

"No good. We're going to have to try jumping him again! Clear! '

"He looks so natural."

"You know he would have wanted to go this way."

"Yeah. I know. But I still can't believe Grampa's gone."

"Mommy, why is great Grampa Jack lying in that thing?"

"His body is sleeping, Billy."

"Sleeping?"

"That's right. And the rest of him is up in Heaven."

"Is he with God, Mommy?"

"Yes...that's right. Why'll I bet your Great Grampa Jack is fishing with Him right now."

"Is he happy?"

"Very happy."

"[I] Great Grampa Jack is happy, Mommy, why is Daddy crying?"

"Because he loved him very much and it will be a very long time until they fish together again."

"Oh. Hey Mommy! There's Ben! Can I go over to see him?"

"Yes. You go ahead and talk with your cousin. I'll go and sit with your Daddy."

"I saw how you handled that, Becky."

"How did I do?"

"Great was right."

"About what?"

"You're a keeper."

"Thank God it worked! Davis Two, his beat is irregular and weak! Call Doctor Conrad! Stat!"

"As you wish, Dr. Burke. He is now summoned."

"Well, Becky, our little boy wants to learn how to drive."

"Drive? Jim, he's too young! Jees—he still calls you 'Daddy.' And he is only sixteen."

"Well, that's not too young. Remember—we started car dating when we were only sixteen."

"But you were so reckless driving back then. And not much has changed."

"All right, Miss Safe Driver Extraordinaire, you teach him."

"No need to be nasty, Jim. It's just that I want him to drive responsibly."

"Well why don't you just go and teach my son how to drive responsibly then?"

"Doctor Burke! Doctor Conrad is here."

"Thank you Davis Three. Hello, Conrad. The stats were sent to you in transit?"

"Yes, they were. They didn't say we'd be working with these robots, though. But I learned something else, when I was in transit."

"Hello?"
“James Austin?”
“Yes. Who is this?”
“My name is Brian Torry. I’m from the Owego Emergency squad. Your wife and son have been in an automobile accident.”
“Oh, my God! Are they alright?”
“You better come down to Wilson Memorial.”
“Are they alright?”
“Please come quickly.”
“Poor bastard! Losing his family that way. Just across the cube, too.”
“Burke! He’s got a flat line!”
“Give me the plates! Clear!”
“Hello, Jimmy.”
“Nothing! Again! Clear!”
“Hello, Jim.”
“ Damn! We’re losing him! Once more! Clear!”
“It didn’t work, Burke. I’m sorry.”
“Hello, Daddy.”

Playground
by
susan montague

During the glitter years
me and the Yo Yo man
would create winds
while kicking the sun.
Bold and Brave we
pumped harder and harder
gliding higher and higher,
never afraid to melt
with the sun.
We found ourselves lost
in the air
connected to the ground,
connected to limbo land.

Air Separation
by
Sharilynn Paolotto

I’m sitting in a room with four doors
Each one is open
Waiting for the world to enter
I’ve sent out invitations
So when it comes
The world will see me at my best
Each time I hear something
That may be a knock
I jump up
And my heart beats faster
But each time is a false alarm
A wrong number
Or a person who has had second thoughts

I’m sitting in a room with no walls
On a chair made of dreams
Waiting for a friend
To come
But no one ever does

The door opens a crack
I see your face
Like it was the last time I saw you
An image so real
I believe that it’s you
But when I reach out to take your hand
The illusion disappears
And I am left holding on to a memory
In an empty room, with no walls