

Journal Entry 16-Jul-25

Category: Coming Undone

written by Astra Chang-Ramsden | August 1, 2025

Today a patient died. Very usual for me as a palliative care doctor. She was seventy years old and very sick for a while. This really shouldn't have surprised anyone, but her family still wept. I was sitting inside the hospice when the funeral home came to get the body. Her relatives watched outside as they loaded her into the vehicle. Then I heard wailing, loud sobs going on outside: a public display of grief that I had not expected.

I think of when my own time comes, when we will have to load my father's body into a van or truck. Maybe in a month or two, if we have that long. Will I wail and bawl? Will I jump into the truck and grab onto the body bag? Will I ugly cry until my nose is red and my eyes swollen? Will my colleagues and friends watch me in fear and uncertainty?

Even hospice nurses don't want to see that raw, fresh grief. Families screaming, knees buckling unexpectedly, falling on the floor. Leaving everyone around them unsure of what to say or do.

When my father dies, I won't be pretty or dignified either. It's the most real those nurses will see me. I hope I don't make a fool of myself when my time comes.

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