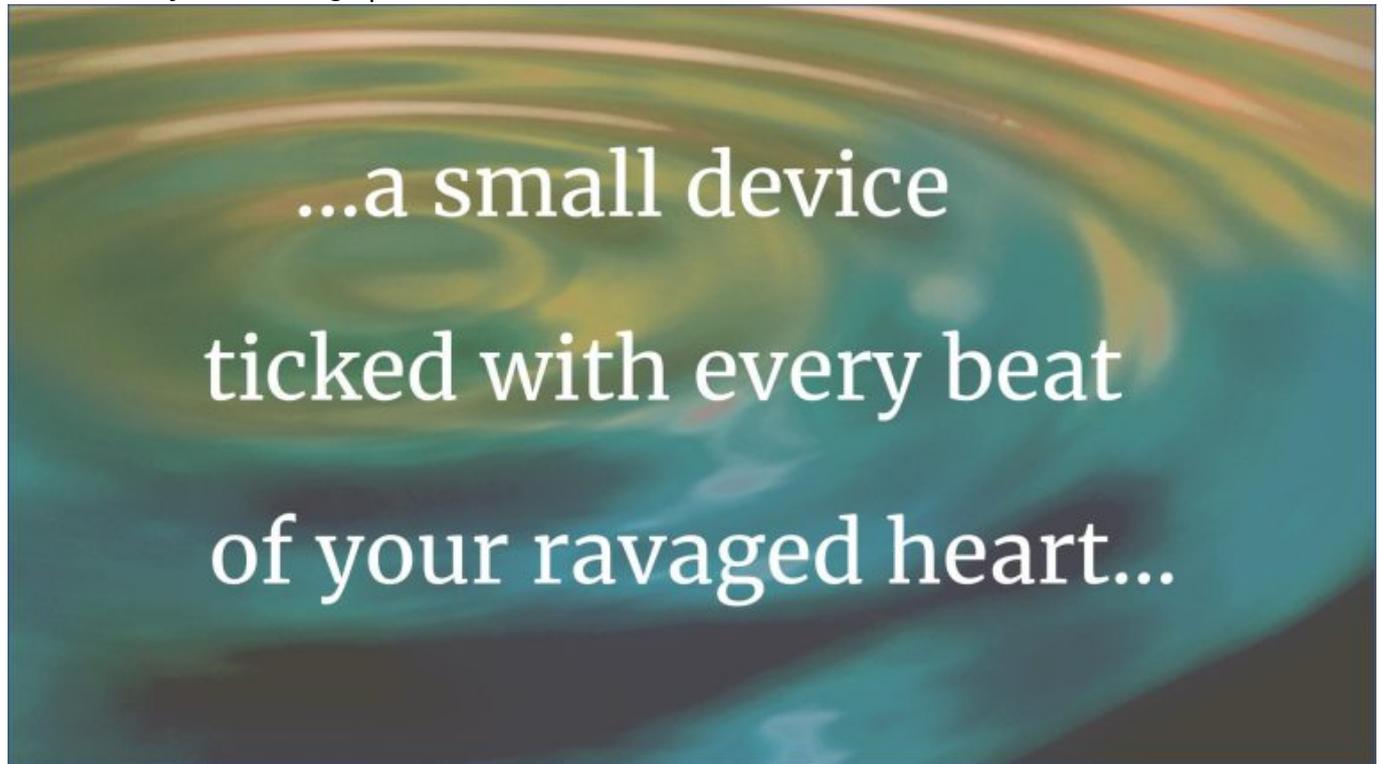


# Alive

Category: Poems

written by Jan Haag | October 18, 2024



40 years ago  
the night before Halloween  
they let me into the frigid room

where they were keeping you  
deeply sedated, your skin blue  
and clammy, barely alive after

having trouble bringing you back,  
with a wicked incision stitched  
from collarbone to near navel

where deep inside a small device  
ticked with every beat of your  
ravaged heart. *Tick. Tick. Tick.*

How could you return from this  
planned assault meant to prolong  
your life with an artificial valve

ticking away the seconds?  
You looked dead then, your face  
waxy and ghoulish, a perfect fright.

And I, spooked beyond every scary  
moment I'd known, felt myself

escape through my scalp,

hovering over the gruesome  
scene. "He's alive," a masked nurse  
assured me. "He's alive."

And I held your porcelain hand,  
letting it chill my own, and, seeping  
back into myself, I clung to

the word, eyes shut tight against  
the horrific scene, listening:  
*Tick. Tick. Tick.*

*Alive. Alive. Alive.*