


Back Pain

Category: Poems

written by William Toms | June 5, 2020



There's more
going on than just
an aching back...

A 77-year-old woman presents with back pain.
No trauma. No radiation. No red flags.
ROS* otherwise surprisingly negative.
Her exam is unremarkable, actually pretty darn good.
FROM, negative SLR, full distal strength, sensation and DTRs.*
After the usual cautions I reassure her,
prescribe activity, no meds and the tincture of time.
She is fine with that, appreciative and pleasant.
Then she says, "Should I talk to my sister?"
They are estranged, as usual about who got Mom's whatever.
Her sister is 86, this has been going on for a long time.
She talks. I listen.
She says, "I should call her, shouldn't I?"
I let her answer her own question. She does.

As she leaves I say, "I hope your back feels better."
She responds, "My back? Oh, my back's fine.
Thanks for the talk. I'll do it."
How do I code this?
I find I don't really care.