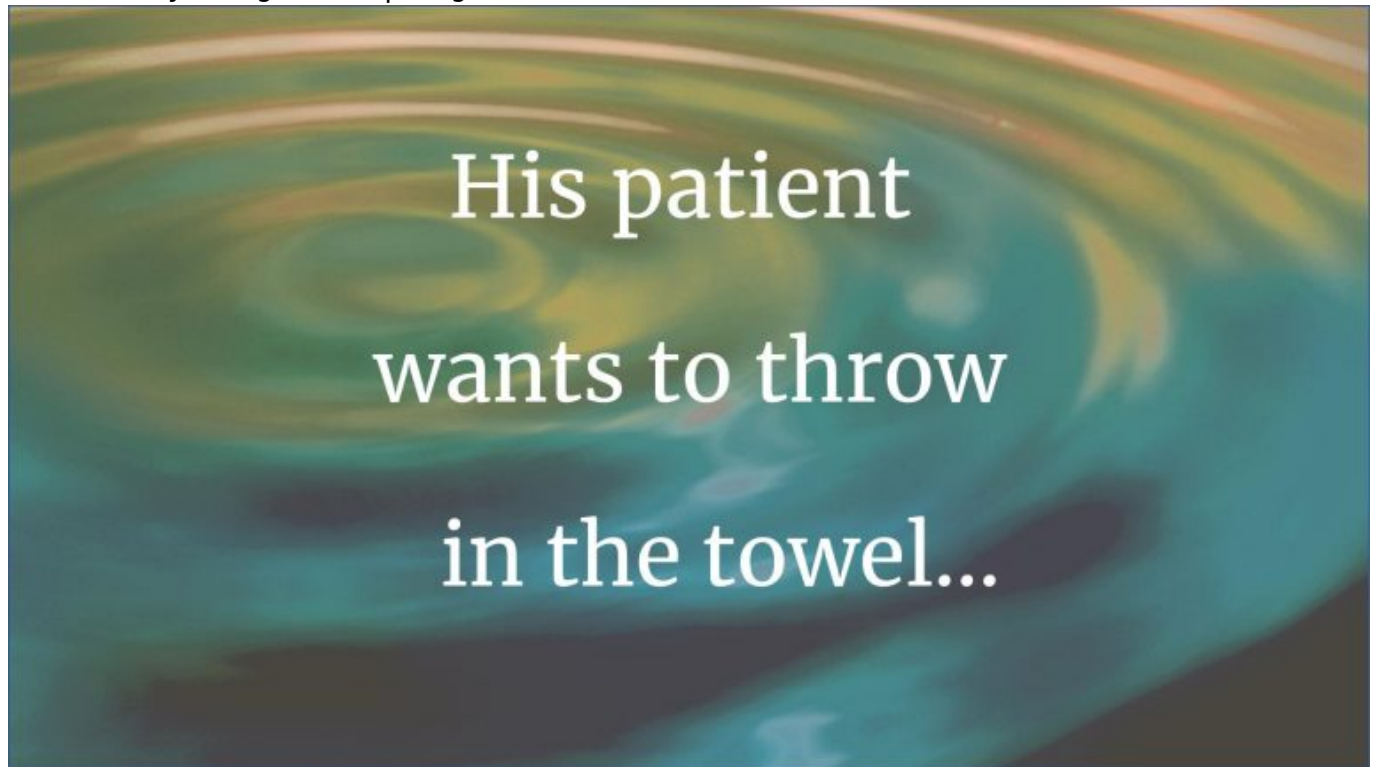


Decision

Category: Poems

written by Greg Mahr | August 28, 2020



B546 wants to die
eight years after they saved her.
Cervical-cord injuries are cruel.
For Maria it was a gunshot,
but it could have been a car wreck, a fall,
or a drunken misstep off a roof.
The reasons seemed to matter; now they don't.
Thirty-two, alone, paralyzed, on a vent,
she mouths "no" to the antibiotics, the heart meds.
"I want to die," she shouts in a whisper.

They want me to decide if she can decide,
if she has decisional capacity,
if she understands the implications,
if she knows what death means.
If she doesn't, they will force her to live.

None of us knows what death means.
She has paid with eight years for not deciding,
While we were boasting like heroes.
I don't know what to do.
I want Maria to choose to live.
I am selfish: It would be easier for me.