

Escape to HuHot

Category: Poems

written by Jennifer Frank | November 11, 2011

Jennifer Frank

Hunched, shriveled, pinched
Enclosed in the metal prison of the wheelchair
You long to be free, unencumbered
By the oxygen tube connecting you to life

Each visit with me brings worse news
Creatinine up, red cells down
Carbon dioxide rising, oxygen falling
You have a medication deficiency

Once you were adventurous
Living life on the edge
For your generation,
You defied expectation

Now you are ending like
Everyone Else.
Hospital-home-hospital-rehab
Home-hospital-nursing home
Death is next

Your passions now are distilled into
Shopping at Walmart
Lunch at HuHot Mongolian Grill
I have never been

While I recite the monotony
End-of-life care
Advise hospice
Encourage compliance
Lecture about smoking
Offering nothing you want or desire

I imagine
Casting off the tubes
Tossing the meds
Lifting you from the prison-chair
Offering you my arm
As we escape to HuHot

About the poet:

Jennifer Frank recently transitioned from academic practice to full-time clinical practice with ThedaCare Physicians in Neenah, Wisconsin. "I write, in part, to help process the often difficult emotions that accompany being a

family physician. It is a way to honor my patients and reflect on my own experience with them." In addition to writing essays and the occasional poem, Jennifer blogs every Tuesday on work-life balance at www.physicianspractice.com/blog.

About the poem:

"This poem was inspired by a wonderful patient, now deceased, who refused to be constrained by her medical diagnoses or illnesses. She inspired me to be more as a person."

Poetry editors:

Judy Schaefer and Johanna Shapiro