

Infinite Excuses

Category: Poems

written by Wynne Morrison | September 19, 2025



My patient's parents
say they are
from Palestine...

A long day makes me want to get home, and I'll have to explain, again, why I'm late to pick up the kids. The merge onto the Expressway slows. At least the drivers stay patient, taking turns. We keep stuttering forward until I see the cause of our delay—two cars against the median, front and sides crumpled metal. Next to them sits a white, windowless van. Bare black letters announce it, *Medical Examiner*, looking like a kid stenciled them on. Something about the surprise of it sticks, even though I'm no stranger to death. So many endings, so many of them hard to comprehend, like the infinite excuses for violence in the world.

Through an interpreter, my patient's parents say they are from Palestine. They traveled halfway around the world, for a chance they couldn't get at home. In the morning, a young doctor joins the team—an Israeli Jew, wearing his kippah, assigned to care for their child for one day. I wonder if they'll ask me to reassign. No request comes. The next day, they want to know where "their" doctor is. The one who speaks Arabic, the one born so near their home. The gentle one, the one who listens to them.