

The Other Side of the Bed

Category: Hospitalized

written by Veronica Tucker | June 16, 2025

At 4 a.m. on post-op day one, I woke up in the living room recliner, my temporary recovery bed. My dog had his paw on my leg. That's when I felt it: wetness. I reached down and found blood.

The surgical drains were overflowing. My incision was bleeding. I was beginning to feel lightheaded. As an emergency medicine physician, I knew that this was not normal.

I called the on-call surgeon, not my own but his partner. She didn't hesitate. "Come to the hospital now," she said.

A short time later, she met me in the parking lot. My husband held his phone flashlight while she assessed me in the dark. Within moments, she decided this needed emergency care.

And so I found myself checking in as a patient to the very emergency department where I work. It was surreal. Familiar faces now focused on me. I was pale, hypotensive, tachycardic: textbook signs of significant blood loss.

My colleagues moved quickly and skillfully, just as I've seen them do countless times. Labs confirmed a drop in hemoglobin. I was admitted overnight for monitoring and care. My own surgeon and his partner took excellent care of me. Thankfully, no return trip to the OR was needed.

By the following evening, I was home again. Grateful. Humbled. And reminded, intimately, of just how much our work matters.

To my ED colleagues: thank you. You saved me.

And to my dog: good boy.

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