

# The Guest House

Category: The Exam Room

written by Ross Carne | January 16, 2026

Rumi had it right in his poem that begins “This being human is a guest house / Every morning a new arrival.” I hope that my medical practice is a guest house and I its welcoming host, offering all that’s at my disposal to fulfill the needs of my guests: the distant, noble intention of a younger self; the years of study; the slow distilling of long hours of experience; hopeful trials, shamefaced errors; the battering by the inexorability of death.

“And how can I help you today?” I ask this morning’s first “guest.”

Hospitality shifts as she turns her face—as a slight quiver in her lower eyelid says, “Doctor, I don’t want to be alone.” I see the four-month wait before she could get this appointment. I see the test results she is still waiting to receive. I see the fear of possibility—the many uncertain paths, each with an unspeakable end.

My eyes return to meet hers and I hope they say, “I am here.”

At least today, I am able to give her a label. With diagnostic certainty will come some easing, some sense of monsters this is not. Sometimes safety is the gift. Her shoulders relax; something she’d held within her releases, a bright connectedness steadies her gaze.

“Thank you, Doctor.”

Perhaps now she can be a little fearless.

“And how do we treat it?” she ventures. I don’t say that we have started already.

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