

# Comfort Care

Category: Persevering

written by Joe Amaral | November 11, 2018

The hospital-style bed lurks empty alive in the pale living room. Rust flecks along its silver rails pock my distorted reflection. Cold sheets triangulate like sagging tepees, housing the smell of long-term illness. These are the ghostly remains of hospice care.

I imagine him still lying there. Asking me to stoke the fire or reach the channel-changer that has dropped into a pile of soiled linen. A water glass abides untouched on the rollaway bed stand, its contents evaporating, glistening with tiny air bubbles, like his final, frantic gasps.

I regard the small, simple, leftover comforts: apple juice, Jell-O, liquid morphine. I scan the wide-screen TV, framed photos, flowers, hastily scribbled messages propped and tacked and creased.

Sycamore trees peek in through serried blinds, swaying in spirit winds. Chuffing and snuffling branches scratch at the window with a soft clamor. Memories pool, my mind a dark well flashing back to the vast mystery marking his descent toward his end of days.

Clutching for purchase, for purpose amid this distortion, I let the depths of loss ripple through me as I clean and pack everything up, lock the door, and return to my regularly scheduled life-minus one.

*Joe Amaral*

*Arroyo Grande, California*