

# House of Cards

Category: Persevering

written by Anne Thomas | November 5, 2018

Feeling the urge to void my bladder, I insert the catheter, but nothing comes out. Odd. That's never happened before. I drink some water and, an hour later, I insert another catheter. Again, no urine appears, just mucus on the tip of the catheter.

I need to void. My whole body is screaming to void. I'm sweating profusely as my system looks for a way to get rid of the urine. I know my BP is rising as my body copes with this stress. I also know that whatever is happening is bad. Really bad. It could damage my kidneys. So I pack up my unusual meds, change the towels wrapped around my torso to help with the sweating, and take myself off to the ER.

I meet with intake and give them my health insurance info. I meet with triage who dutifully takes my temp and BP. A couple hours later they take me into the back and do an EKG. I don't understand why they are doing the EKG, but use the opportunity—while they are applying stickers—to change out my soaked towel with a dry one. Things move more quickly from there because my heart is in arrhythmia.

The doc walks in, and I launch into my health history. "I'm a T-4 paraplegic since 1976 as a result of a car accident. But that's not why I'm here. In 2008 I was diagnosed with a rare blood disease, myelofibrosis, and was transfusion-dependent for three and half years. But that's not why I'm here. Last year I broke both my legs and they have not healed, nor are they expected to. But that's not why I'm here."

And then I pause internally, I have to laugh. I've never strung all those maladies together before.

How is it that I'm still alive, still kicking, still having fun despite all those challenges? Because fundamentally I'm a happy person, and while my body is a delicate house of cards that I manage, when it works, life is full.

This current crisis is just another pothole on that journey. And, by now, I know how to steer through it.

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