

One More

Category: Eating

written by Julie A. Dickson | March 5, 2022

He sits on a stool in his office, scrolling quickly through hundreds of images, slowing briefly to scrutinize one. Those of us walking by and looking over his shoulder are awed: His practiced eye knows exactly what to look for after more than 30 years doing this.

No watch discloses how many hours he's been reading mammography images—his unconscious goal being to avoid missing even one anomaly before he moves on to the next image. His coffee cup sits empty by his elbow, next to his long-forgotten breakfast sandwich.

His stomach growls in a low, prolonged pitch. Through the cracked-open door of his office, he is barely aware of his fellow radiologists leaving and then returning from the cafeteria, trays in hand, bearing sandwiches or salads consumed (but not really tasted) at their desks. There's no time for a leisurely break to savor lunch. They's always fighting their way through a backlog of X-rays, CT scans, and MRIs.

Later, when he actually feels hunger grinding in his middle, he sips some water, not moving his eyes from the screen. *One more*, he thinks. *Just one more case and then I'll get some lunch*. He pushes on.

On his way home that evening, finally feeling the full extent of the day's caseload and at last acknowledging his hunger, he cannot recall whether he ever had lunch that day.

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