



Leadership Track

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When I become Dean of American Medicine—
(I'm still waiting for the call)
Here are some things that will change:

Hospitals will be laid out on a grid system.
The C wing found between the B wing and the D wing
And not down by the ICU.
The floors will rise sequentially
Never skipping “6” or having two
Disconnected fourth floors.
No matter what elevator you are on
It will be the right one.

As you walk from the lounge
Where your friends are
To the wards
Where your patients are
You will notice
The framed photographs of hospital administrators
Old and new
have been replaced
With generations of
Therapy pets.

When you pass a waiting room and hear a name called,
You will hear whooping and clapping:
The sound of someone getting
Something they've really been waiting for
Not just another copay receipt.

When you enter a hospital room
to examine a patient
and stand,
as though you have no knees
or you once stood up and forgot how to sit back down,
the ceiling will descend
not so you notice
But just so you feel
more comfortable
when seated.
In compensation your phone

Will ring only with the news you want to hear when you are
With a patient.

The cafeteria will run on a sliding emotional scale
So the closer you are to the best or worst day of your life
The closer you are to a free chicken salad sandwich
Or a plate of scrambled eggs and toast with butter
And coffee however you like it.
Cream and even
Sugar

After lunch you will have rounds
The brokenness of a human body
The wholeness of the human body
still
a wonder
The students will notice.

Waiting for your first patient
In the office
After rounds
You will notice the ink in medical journals will grow
More opaque as the information
They publish grows
More true.

Your hands—
the ones you use for feeling thyroids and
counting heartbeats and
Leopold maneuvers and
tactile fremitus and
holding other people's sadness—
will never smell like a dime-sized dollop of ethyl alcohol and moisturizers.
Instead, when you move the otoscope from one ear
To another
The patient will inhale and
the scent of your hands will remind her of
the cot on the porch at her cousin's house
Canvas and autumn and adolescence
She will feel better.

This will all change
When I become Dean of American Medicine—
Until then I'll be here at my desk
Waiting to hear a trill
Or a beep
Or a buzz
From this
Bright
Red
Phone.

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