



Smothered Hurts

Henry Bair, BS

(Fam Med. 2021;53(3):225.)

doi: 10.22454/FamMed.2021.693830

They have sutured lacerations
which have slashed me to the bone
and bled me to faintness;
but time heals all wounds,
and only the faintest scars remain,
the occasional reminders
of a long-ago trauma,
a now forgotten pain,
become an amusing anecdote to share
among droll acquaintances at a dull cocktail party
I didn't want to attend to begin with.

But the scars upon my soul
left by the careless handling
of one who should have loved me
never completely closed;
they fester still at the edges,
oozing painful memory
past the jagged stitches
that fail to hold me fast
and threaten to burst apart
to expose me to the crowds of gawking onlookers
who point and stare then run away.

They have given me little pills,
that smother my hurts,
and fool others into thinking
those hurts never were.
I return to my tasks seemingly whole,
even dance across the floor
to a dizzy jazzy beat,
fall in a heap of laughter
into my lover's arms
where I sleep in tentative bliss,
dreaming of a better morning.

But there is no panacea,
no miracle elixir I may take
that will restore my broken spirit,
or silence the inner voices
that assault me without warning;
no anesthetic for the mind that won't forget
the venomous killing words hurled at the heart,
the inappropriate stolen touches,
the child robbed of innocence
who lurks behind the smiling eyes of the woman grown
and cries to be released from her hell.

Venerable workers of medical wonder,
you heal the body; heal my mind, as well.

CORRESPONDENCE: Address correspondence to Henry Bair, 291
Campus Drive, Stanford, CA 94305. 832-648 0227. hbair@stanford.edu.