



Window

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(Fam Med. 2022;54(5):399.)

doi: 10.22454/FamMed.2022.559750

She arrives alone, shriveled, her fourth
Finger especially small, shrunk
Within a scratched ashy band.

Thirty-six and no known
Problems never
Been to a doctor, here
With abdominal pain.

“I’ve been
Feeling
Hot, throw-
-ing up...
I’m leak-
-ing green,”
She tells me
Between heavy
Pants and grimaces,
Her face a wrinkled
willow, her torso writhing
Between withered limbs.

Vesicles of sweat slide down
Her face, procreating
Into larger sacs, threatening
To boil over to contaminate
The foamy mattress, dented with memory
Of thousands of patients it fostered inside
With pain from outside the hospital womb.

She gasps,
“Am I pregnant?”
Staining a tissue with sweat-tears.
We will get the test, I tell her, but
For what I’m suspecting
I need chlamydia and gonorrhea
Tests and a sexual history first.

Unprotected sex
With her husband of fifteen years but
“He comes and goes as he pleases from the home.”

Outside the window
A wilted willow,
A woeful widow
Wronged by her Othello.

“I don’t know where he’s been.”

I put my stethoscope back in the pocket
Of my white coat that granted me a rare window-
-scope unveiling the surroundings of her biology.

Strangers but an hour ago, we were locked
In a bond defined by care. She showed me
Through her trust, through her misery,
Her husband’s infidelity.

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