

Imperfect Knowledge

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Title: Imperfect Knowledge

Author: Richard Bronson

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Imperfect Knowledge is a collection of 66 short poems by Richard Bronson. Dr Bronson is a recipient of the American College of Physicians' Poem of the Year Award and a faculty member in the Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology and the Center for Medical Humanities, Compassionate Care, and Bioethics at the Renaissance School of Medicine at Stony Brook University. *Imperfect Knowledge* is his fifth published collection of poetry.

Dr Bronson presents the collection without supplementary commentary or narration. The poems often have a clear medical theme, although some are less evidently related, and vary in length and format, giving the collection overall readability and flow. In addition to working collectively, the poems stand independently. Readers will be able to pick up at any poem, reading even just one or two per sitting. This, in addition to the poems' short length, makes the collection an appealing means for centering the mind at the end of a long day.

Many of the poems are relatable and put into words difficult situations that clinicians experience every day. My favorite of the poems is "Taking Sides" (p. 44), which discusses a near miss and a medical intern who finds the confidence to speak up to prevent it. Near misses happen every day on the wards, and by reading "Taking Sides," I was able to recall and reflect on my similar experiences.

Another poem I enjoy is "First Do No Harm" (p. 76), in which a clinician reflects on their transformational career. I find the poems that are not clearly related to medicine less enjoyable and relatable, and I think the collection could have done without a handful of them.

Overall, *Imperfect Knowledge* is an easy and enjoyable read. It is pertinent in the current climate of medicine, with its high burnout rates and difficult daily situations, as a means for relating and decompressing. The collection would be helpful for any clinician and for residents in particular as a vehicle for solidarity and peace. Medicine is such a difficult career, and reading about others' similar experiences is an excellent coping method. Introducing this book to learners may help them prevent burnout and improve their wellness.