

Inside the Wooden Box

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On my shelf there is a wooden box
Not worth much, a dollar store find
Yet the contents are invaluable
I keep treasured words inside
Sometimes, only sometimes
I allow myself to peek, to read, to steep in the
Kindness within

A jumble of cards, tokens, and notes
Prized words of thanks and thoughtfulness
Such heartfelt offerings from patients
Like embers, they warm me with their considerate glow
Memories of human connection where hope shines

A birthday card received when I nearly forgot my own
A letter from a patient's daughter after her passing
A thank-you note folded in two with neat handwriting
A beautiful crayon drawing, handiwork of a small child

In a profession in which we are so attuned to notice the wrong
The faults and failures occupy our minds
Long after all else has left
Guilt is worn, heavy and unshed for far too long
Recollections of shortcomings are swift to resurge

This wooden box serves as a reminder of the good
It reaffirms that my presence here matters
That sometimes, I am doing right

So, the box will remain on the shelf
As a witness, a testament to my purpose
And I will continue to care