

Apology to a Patient

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I'm sorry that I rushed when we were talking
my questions and responses much too fast
Conveying final thoughts already walking
glancing at my phone as minutes passed
I didn't see your face was so downcast

I'm sorry in my haste that I denied you
dignity, compassion, thought, and care
I should have paused, have come and knelt beside you
and listened to your fears and your despair
I should have been more present and aware

I'm sorry I discounted your emotion
the trust you placed in me that I betrayed
I should have slowed amidst all the commotion
I should have looked and seen you were afraid
I should have held your hand

I should have stayed

PRESENTATIONS: This poem was presented at Cleveland Clinic's 2023 Compassion and Valuing Every Person event.