

The Specialty of And

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—To a medical student considering the study of family medicine

You can prevent and you can educate.
You can diagnose and you can rehabilitate.
Sometimes, when quick, you may save the day
And at other times realize there is nothing more to say.
Wild winds will undoubtedly whip at the sail—
And you will learn to chart new courses if the first ones fail.

There will be children who cannot yet stand
And grandparents, to whom you will lend your hand.
There will be newcomers—and you, too, will take your turn
Admitting that you have a lot left to learn.
At times you'll be certain, at times full of doubt—
Being humble and kind will help you figure things out.

You'll discuss the eyes, and the depths of psychology,
Become learned in phenology and the fine art of apology.
You may serve rich and poor, in good times and less so
And they will recall the character you show
When you quote from Osler, when you mention Tolstoy,
As you comfort their heartbreak, and share in their joy.

And connections you stitch will reach back to you
So that you may be cushioned when you stumble, too.
Family medicine's an art and family medicine's a science—
And you will strengthen your community, alliance by alliance.
You can do all of this and, in fact, so much more
And you need not settle for either/or.