



## Hope in humanity

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Received: 09-JUN-2016

Accepted: 02-SEP-2016

Published Online: 03-SEP-2016

I saw Kindness today  
In the crowded hospital corridor.....  
Where the blaring discordance of a Babel of voices  
                announced its defeat to the soundless roar of sickness.  
When, a pregnant lady, lurching up the steps  
tried to fit her bulk into a queue  
amidst the sweaty bodies  
a member of the forgotten masses, she stoically looked about  
with dead eyes, clutching her worn out bag, waiting  
                for the journey - or life - to end.  
A portly old man, gingerly got up,  
vacating his place on a bench for her  
       .....she sat  
without an acknowledgement,  
                stoic in her acceptance of favor - or blow?  
“Thank You” and “No, not this” ....equally alien to her.  
Yet, when she looked up and met the old man’s eyes  
                ...it was not her eyes that I saw – dead, dreamless -  
but someone else’s - brimming with vibrancy, vigor - someone  
....who twirled out on tiptoe and embraced the faded light  
in that old man’s eyes....  
in their reflected shine I saw 'Kindness'.

I met Love today  
While hurrying across the crowded patch  
                of green, in front of the emergency department

Cite this article as: Singh K. Hope in humanity. RHiME. 2016;3:42-43.

I trespassed upon the camaraderie  
    between a pigeon  
    and a bedraggled patient-attendant  
The one busy pecking grains scattered for his like....  
The other nibbling the same - uncooked seedy corn seeds  
    - discarded by *his* like.  
Lost in his misery, want, hunger, his passive acceptance of destiny  
He occasionally stroked the pigeon,  
....who, tamed by hunger, tolerated the touch of a different species.  
He spent – giving love from his spent frame, giving,  
    while waiting – anxious for news  
    - of the fate of his ailing patient.  
In that slow measured stroke from calloused, weary, hungry hands  
I met 'Love'.

I witnessed Compassion today  
Struggling through a crowded outpatient department,  
    The weary father carried a frail bundle  
    his daughter ... for her daily therapy  
At her feeble cry, he listlessly patted her  
a mechanical gesture sans solace  
    ....lines etched on his tired face speaking of grief  
beyond articulation.  
He unfailingly brought her for her daily injections,  
    hoping for healing - or just deferring the inevitable?  
His silence an acceptance of impending, inevitable death?  
The case-hardened, grief-proof, nurse  
    looked at the duo  
Recognized them as the pair from yesterday....  
    her gaze softened  
A brisk pat on the gnarled hand of the father, and  
“She will be all right, Baba. You are doing all you can for her.”  
The weary, aching paternal eyes, brightened -  
    I witnessed 'Compassion', reach out and follow the man  
as he walked towards the doctor's room.

Small gestures, which ask for no certificate of merit;  
Small deeds, which ask for neither acclaim nor fame;  
Small acts of kindness, love, compassion ...  
I glimpsed humanity inside humans today.

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