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## Hope

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## Hope

### Keywords

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# Hope

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From the door, he appears fit and well-built  
But shoulders and face hide a torrent within.  
Our eyes meet, and he sees I bear more bad news  
As I slide onto the bed's edge.

His news had always been bad.  
News 45-year olds are not supposed to hear.  
Small cell. Then chemo resistance. Then spinal  
metastases.  
But for the last 10 months, he clung to Hope  
As a child grips a security blanket.

Now I'm back with more.  
His dyspnea is a collapsed lung;  
His rash is a constellation of clotting and bleeding  
That was going to end his life in hours to days.

He sees I have come to take Hope.  
He tries to grip it tighter.  
"There must be some new treatment."  
He sees in my face that there are none.

We knew this day would come.  
We talked about it many times.  
Yet he seems completely unprepared  
To part with his trusted friend Hope.

Hope had always been by his side.  
Through chemo, radiation, disability.  
It whispered of miracles, cures, another chance.  
Hope had always staved off this moment.

He looks past me, out the window.  
Hope whispers a final desperate plea.  
Suddenly, his tears flow.  
Mine follow.

He looks older than when I walked in.  
I feel sick that I pried Hope away.  
I offer my hand.  
A long silence ensues.

"What now?", he asks, marshalling our now  
smaller team.  
We talk about plans.  
We talk about today's, instead of tomorrow's.  
His old memories brighten the room.

Then Hope reappears  
But in a new, smaller role.  
We both realize we missed Hope  
But like an old lover,  
We both keep our distance.

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