PAINLESS JAUNDICE

When dealing with jaundice that is painless,  
Your thinking should not be aimless.

Last night we admitted this fellow,  
Whose skin happens to be bright yellow.

Much to his dismay,  
His poop looks like clay.

He found it important to remark,  
That is pee-pee is very dark.

His AST/ALT and bilirubin are high,  
But his alk phos is normal, and we want to know why.

There are many causes with potential,  
So let’s begin with the differential.

When you begin your differential construction,  
You might want to think about obstruction.

On the list is hemolysis,  
Along with hepatic cirrhosis.

To avoid any complications,  
First you should go over his medications.

Arising is another question,  
Could it be ingestion?

If he drank a lot of booze,  
That would be note-worthy news.

Another clue to solve the mystery,  
Could be his family and travel history.

But none of this sheds any light  
On why he is here tonight.

It didn’t hurt when we palpated his abs,  
But let’s talk about some labs.

TSH, CBC, Hepatitis panel, AMA, UDS, CMP—  
Let’s find out what’s darkening his pee.

HIV, EBV, Ceruloplasmin, Zoster, HSV—  
I think we need abdominal CT.

We will wait to see the results of all the tests  
And see what they might suggest.

There is a feeling of dread,  
That this may be cancer of the pancreatic head.

But let’s not fly too close to the sun like Icarus,  
Just because there is scleral icterus.

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Photograph courtesy of Sandarsh Kancherla, MD