A Tribute to our Nurses

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I turned faint and weary as the page came through
"Your patients heart rate is one hundred eighty"
My legs shook as I ran up the stairs
Thoughts racing a mile a minute, hoping someone more
knowledgeable might be there first
As I turned a corner, color draining from my face
Then I spot my savior, the nurse, holding a syringe filled
with the medication
I knew now my patient and I were in good hands.

As I had a conversation with my patient and her family
Her medication pumps went off, the bed alarm blared,
the television roared loudly in the background
We were trying to answer her serious questions in
somber, hushed tones
Trying to convey our understanding of her disease
processes
Removing every distraction, her nurse was there
To turn off the pump, help the patient up in bed, pause
the television remote
Allowing us all to focus on the health of our patient
Another patient needs labs every four hours to make sure
his body doesn’t reject his medications
Veins thin and thready, rolling and scarred
He winces in pain as he was stuck for the fourth time
Tonight
Ultrasound, tighter tourniquets, smaller needles
When all he really needed was a nurse’s sensitive touch.
One finger on the target vessel, holding it taut
Finally, labs were drawn.

Three more hours into the night, a patient complains of
more pain
We had already given him large doses of analgesics
We told the patient once, knowing he’ll ask again, against
his better judgment
“No more, not for another few hours”
A seemingly simple answer from the house staff
While behind the scenes, a nurse was truly alleviating pain
by adjusting his bed, placing a heating pad, laying a
comforting hand on where it hurts
Compassion, a virtue each nurse is blessed with.

As the night comes to an end,
Sleepy eyed house staff wander,
CODE BLUE, CODE BLUE
Suddenly everyone’s running
Nurses there first, compressions already begun.
I frantically wonder, what exactly happened? What do I
do next?
The nursing team already with the crash cart in hand
Suggest epinephrine.
The code quickly turns from chaos to an organized
rhythm
Her pulse restarted. Nurses calling loved ones.
Compliment the team on a job well done.

The early hours dawn, and the 4 am interns start their
rounds
Interns turn pale as the patient yells about his pain and all
the distractions over night
Only the intern, often the receiver of frustration, as the
day starts
Tears pouring down, trying to comfort
Who runs in to save the morning,
But the nurse. Easing the patient and intern alike
A twinkle in her eye, as the nurse knows year after year,
her jobs gets harder on July first.

That beloved last page of the night.
“Patient is vomiting. I’ve cleaned them, changed them,
and restarted their fluids. Maybe they need something for
nausea?”
Everything the patient really needs has already been
done.
As I reflect on the night, There’s little I could have done
well without my nurses.
“Sure, zofran. Thank you…For everything”