

What's Inside

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Abstract

A physician's reflection on how we can look healthy on the outside yet on the inside be suffering a great tragedy, and in these situations sometimes the only thing we can do is create a meaningful human connection. A laugh and a smile can have timeless value.

What's Inside

I fear becoming my patient.
Positron emissions where they shouldn't be,
x-ray deflections that aren't quite right.

On the outside, he smiles,
with only the faintest hint
of the terrible, tragic, and
deathly wrong.

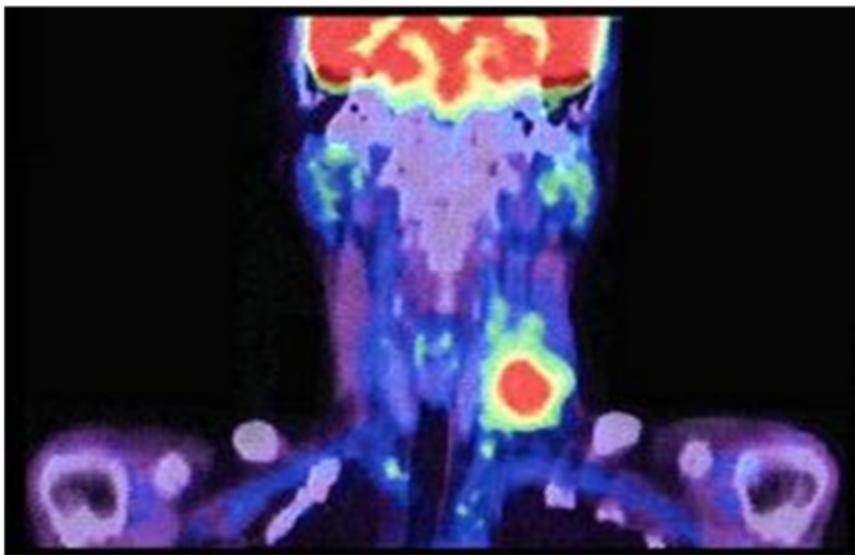
I give the radioactivity
- yes I'm helping! -
then, bad news comes,
the disease progresses,
and pain happens.

The wife, the child at home,
the things left undone.
The great beyond of forever.
An unstoppable tsunami,
not far off.

So I smile warmly.
We share a laugh.
We still have this moment.
We still have this joy.

The burst of light we share can't be seen,
yet it shines brighter
than the photon flux,
that hits the crystal,
inside my camera.

The scan is real,
but what does it reveal,
about what's inside?



*A PET/CT scan of a patient with an abnormal hypermetabolic lesion
of the left neck, consistent with cancer.*

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