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Poems
by
doctors

The Most Serious Moment of Our Lives

Ron Charach

Years later as Mindy began to unravel,
and rolled on the hospital floor
when she failed to get her way,
her second drink of lye
impressing not one soul
in her exhausted family,
they all agreed to
plug her into the wall
when the fourth and final round of pills
failed to work.
Wheel her back when you're finished,
head turned over on its side
so she can't breathe her vomit,
meaning no aspiration.

But when her eyes unsealed in the white tiled room,
and she hoarsely called for water,
she recognized my role in this,
my professional ring through the plastic.
She may have seen a liar straining
to escape from my face,
because instead of asking about her husband
and the kids,
and who knew,
and did everybody know,
instead, she turned her electric breath on me.
Automatically, I told her, "Shhh, it's okay now . . ."
but she looked me up and down and said, "This
is the most serious moment
of *our* lives."

Ron Charach was born in Winnipeg, Canada. He studied medicine in Toronto and trained in psychiatry in New York. He has lived in Toronto since 1980. The two poems are from *Selected Portraits*. Hamilton, Wolsak & Wynn Publishers.

Poem selected by Femi Oyeboode.

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