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5:32 A.M.: Hospital Time

John M. Shalvey

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5:32 A. M. - - Hospital Time

*The silent flashes of rigid white, stilted starched, stubborn aprons
And nylon symphonies in scurries of soft speeded-breath nurses;
Exhausted, sweat-marked, haggard internes desperately draped in smocks, -
Once hardened to white marble stiffness, -
Wrinkled, blood sprinkled, and crushed by the night's harsh hours of wear;
The crumpled, fluid stained, light blue slacks of Obstetrics' delivery room
And the scapel creased, prim green trousers of the Operating room
Protrude as pilings supporting tornado tossed, cyclone cursed beacons
In the irascible ocean of life.*

*These apostles of modern medicine possess the hand won knowledge of centuries,
But are slaves of the mechanism,*

*Hanging and humming on the wall above the desk in the Emergency Ward,
That projects its movements into each treatment room.*

*Their eyes plead with the hands of the clock to give them minutes,
Precious minutes, valuable minutes to work - to sweat - to pant -
To fight and fight and fight and work.*

But defiant Death collects its toll from man for having lived.

*The somber garb of sacerdotal black absorbs the whispered words
Of consolation, that bounce around and in and out the ears
Of shocked, staring, stunned, death-robbed parents;
And the clock spits seconds into eternity.*

*Against the rhythmic hum of the huge red hand, that chops its way
Around the face of the twenty-four hour clock, -
Cradled in the alcove of the Labor Room, -
The mother's cry in pains of birth announces the entrance
Of a helpless, strengthless, seven pound, six ounce mass
Of speckled-pink, slippery, stripent, soul-stained, innocent flesh
Into this weary, fighting, pushing, striving, warring, brawling, feuding,
Wrangling world.*

*5:32 A. M. in the hospital corridors with pox-lighted windows.
Death walks its patrol, a snatching, silent, sneaking, thieving sentry,
And tosses a mocking, sneering, scornful, sarcastic laugh to Life.*

*5:32 A. M. Hospital Time - a night's rest is gone.
The day begins anew for a weary brain in a tired body to visit the sick,
Comfort the sorrowing, to prepare the dying, to give them Christ,
The Saviour of their souls.
The chosen one of God's Anointed continues the endless quest
For that lonely, saddened, wandering soul,
To sneak through Heaven's unlocked back door,
Forever opened by dropping blood in the blackest hours
On Calvary's slope.
Death can claim the body,
But his consolation is to know that Hell is cheated of a soul.*

*Father John M. Shalvey
Pottsville, Penna.*