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A Doctor's Prayer

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A Doctor's Prayer

The author of this poem was a past president of the California Academy of Family Physicians; the poem appeared in the January/February, 1982 issue of that group's publication, California P. Doctor Snodgrass died of a cerebral hemorrhage in November, 1982.

TEACH me, dear Lord, that the hypertrophy of the head is more deadly than the hypertrophy of the heart, that the hyper-acidity of unforgiveness is more distressing than the "heart burn" of an ulcer.

Help me to live so that I can lie down and sleep each night, with a clear conscience, without a bromide or barbiturate, and unhaunted by the faces of those I have charged fees.

Grant, I beseech Thee, the power to focus my eyes on the distant goal of Heaven; eyes undimmed by the blurring myopia of fame or fortune. Keep my ears alert to the call of duty, undeafened by the clinking of polluted dollars.

Guide my mind and hand as I administer healing potions to suffering patients; help me to remember that the hypodermic needles should be tempered with the therapy of sympathy; the tonics enhanced by the stimulant of kindness; the transfusions aided by the nourishment of tenderness.

And then, when the last patient has been comforted, when the stethoscope, journals, and books have been laid aside, may my last call be Thy call, as I rest in the peace which Thou only can send. Amen.

Wilfred Snodgrass, M. D.