

POETRY/FICTION

Poem

DID I MAKE A DIFFERENCE?

I walk in to the dialysis unit at 8.15 am and see an elderly gentleman in bed, staring up at the ceiling.

He cannot see me.
His naso-gastric tube is
Hooked up to the wall.

His intravenous fluids are
Hooked up to the IV in his arm.

His chest wall catheter is
Hooked up to the dialysis machine.

Machines are beeping
The staff are on their toes
Telephones are ringing

Today he has no voice
You see, it was his choice

His son could not let him go
Could not let him be
Could not make the life changing decision
For his cancer-ridden
Dying father

His family knows
He cries out

His son desperately holds back the tears
And leaves

Yet the elderly gentlemen's silent
Agony and Pain linger

Long into my heart.

And after examining him, I write my note in his chart concluding with "Blood Pressure stable, no fluid removal, Epogen for anemia, next dialysis tomorrow" and move on to see my next patient. . .

—Yasmin Brahmhatt, M.D.