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Across the Sea

Aviva Goldberg

We sit at the side of this tiny crib
as we have for many days now.
I tell you things aren't getting better.

You say you understand,
but tell me that you have faith
that you believe in miracles
and that there are people praying,
across the sea.

I say I understand,
but I have faith in science, and creatinine
and in the miracle that is dialysis
because the numbers are not falling, only rising.

I too believe, in a way,
but have sat at the bedside of other parents whose prayers were not answered
in time.
I know that there is still room for faith, even at the bedside of the suffering,
but God can be hard to see in the corners of a children's ward.

We agree that you will continue to pray
and I will page the surgeons and the nurses and the ICU,

that we will call on our angels wherever we seek them,
that we will retreat to the corners where we make sense of the senseless,
and that we will meet somewhere in the middle.

And then ...
and then ...
and then ...

There is hope in loud pagers and quiet devotions.
There are numbers that are better.
Just a little for now but the promise of more.
There is a light.

I thank medicine and you thank God,
but I whisper “hallelujah” and you want to know the potassium.
I don’t know whose angels answered, whose certainty won out,
But it is of no matter, for now, as somehow,
at the side of this tiny crib,
we have, together,
made room for both.

About the Author

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