

ODE FROM THE HEART

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The song from my radio filled the car, and floated out into the air and mingled with the cool breeze. Today the chirping of birds were clear and I could hear the rustling leaves. When I stopped at the traffic light, I realized that I never saw how green the trees were and how beautiful the sky with a few wispy clouds passing. Nature seemed to be at peace even when the world around me groaned due to this virus. By whatever name you call it, it is a symbol of tear and fear.

Just as I step out of my car, I remember to don my mask and quickly walk along the walkway to the entrance. I look to the branches of a tree on the right of the walkway and noticed the little robin who sings daily without fail. I know the screening questions by heart now and the thermometer scans my forehead. The little sticker placed on my badge feels like a gold star that I received in kindergarten for good behavior. I start another day at the hospital.

Everything has changed since this pandemic began. I miss seeing the smiles of people and hearing their voices now muffled through the masks. How this invisible thing has visibly altered the world, as we know it. How every touch and every breath became calculated. You really want to hug a patient as their silent tears soak their masks and you just have to hold back. Nevertheless, I remember that our presence and words can embrace people around us, to comfort and strengthen them.

We zoom in for meetings and you may or may not see the face behind the voices or the silent listeners. Birthdays, graduations and send off parties are on hold. Patients lie alone on their beds as their families see and talk to them from a screen. A stranger holds their hand and watch their breathing as the machines chime. Many lives are lost and funerals held quietly and far from homes.

I long for the days when we could meet friends in the park or stroll through the mall. Will the days come back when we ate in a restaurant or enjoyed a walk along the beach? I wish those moments could be frozen and kept in a glass jar that could never be shattered.

As the orange glow of the sun drenches everything around me, I slowly walk back to my car. A silent prayer floats in the evening breeze; the drive is quite, the sky an impossible hue of gold and purple. The leaves gently rustle and believe it, the birds are still chirping!