

FOREWORD BY
SHERWIN B. NULAND



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**DANIELLE OFRI AND THE STAFF OF
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In the Hospital

David Lehman

In the hospital there was time
to read to dream to act
to read Freud's dream book on his couch
and how his best thoughts came to him
in the hospital during
World War I for example when
he invented a new way of opening
a vein while sitting in front of
a typewriter the wound
survived him but in the hospital
he knew only the words glory
and honor and country
rhymed with story
and malheur and the country
matters Hamlet lauded
in Ophelia's lap when mad
or pretending to be mad
and Denmark wasn't a prison
or brothel it was a hospital

How Suffering Goes

Melisa Cabnmann-Taylor

I sit. The ache in my calves and ankles is severe.
I watch the monkey scratch my mother's head. Mother says
she has a headache. The monkey is laughing.
She says she has a sharp pain in her eardrum where the monkey
has pinned his long pink finger and stuck out his tongue.

From the far right corner of the room someone sneezes. I hear it.
A car engine, a cough. There are needles in my toes.
The Insight Meditation leader says to name your feelings.
I had car rides with my mother in mind. Naming
and holding herself one part at a time. She punctuated silence
with *stomach, stomach, stomach* and *neck, neck, neck*.

An abbreviated story of two failed marriages and a childhood
of bandages. Self pity like a cool, wet rag pressed to her forehead.
The meditation leader says it's best to catch the pain early,
when the unpleasant sensation arises, to come back to breath.

I am in the car with her and the unpleasant sensation arises.
I remember her beached body under afternoon blankets and bottles
of prescriptions willing to concede she was *sick, sick, sick*. The leader
says to name feelings three times before we scratch an itch, lift
a numb leg, or brush a stray hair from our face.

I sit in the car and say: *pain* again and again. Still it's there
where my face is *aversion* and *suffering* in the side-view mirror.
We climb stairs to our destination, and she cries
three times about her knees. Her chant is a haunt that echoes
from closets of old clothes, old minds

like old monkeys, always moving, scratching, knocking on glass.
I hear them. Their laughter, a group of girls running through
the apartment hallway. Rain falling over the porch. A change in light.
A small tremble of breath across the upper lip,
again and again and again.