

The Missed Student

The following poem is dedicated to mental health awareness in the medical field.

At the end of 2016, studies were released demonstrating the prevalence of depression amongst medical students, reaching up to a quarter of the student body. Few seek help.

I wrote this poem after reflecting on the mental health of my colleagues. If a quarter of medical students are depressed, then it is blindly optimistic for me to think that all of my friends are mentally well and supported. This new knowledge left me unsettled.

We need to be perceptive. I challenge all of us to be as proactive in caring for our colleagues as we are for our patients.

The Missed Student

He lives in a nightmare that people call a dream,
His sadness unnoticed, his cry a silent scream.
He feels no achievement, he falls into abyss,
Unfocused and hopeless; his spirit is amiss.
He walks through the busy halls; no one spares a smile,
Goes about his duties; it's been this way a while.

He scrambles up the strength to face that final day,
Decision made, plans final; his fears kept at bay.
He cleans out his locker, faces the painful walk,
Through the wards and out the door, down across the block.
Home alone he takes the chance to leave one remark;
A letter to his parents; his story in the dark.

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I stare down at my black dress, cut short at my knees,
Standing on the sacred floor with guilt and unease.
I cannot bear to raise my head and see his mother cry,
And so I listen to her voice; she says her last goodbye.
I think of all I did not say, the signs that I missed,
I focused on my studies; I failed to assist.

- KM (A Canadian Medical Student)