



Gravity

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I wrote this poem as a resident, while tending to a patient on a hospital ward. This lovely patient inspired me to think about the many human moments we share with our patients daily. I offer this poem as a humble reflection about the thought that visits us during our training as physicians: How can I save this patient's life? I found that the answer to this question is not entirely scientific and often relies on matters of humanity.

Of airplanes

He spoke of airplanes and skies.
 He spoke of people—
 Good people he has loved and written to.
 "Don't go, sit with me for a little
 Don't worry, dear, I am fine ... but how are you?"

How am I?
 As my throat begins to tighten
 As all my being screams and yearns to weep
 I run through pills and algorithms and pathways ...
 For any last futile attempt to treat.

I have been taught
 To guard the breaths of living,
 To conquer pain, find every way to mend.
 And as I am sitting by the bedside of a falling pilot
 I cannot seem to let go of his hand.

But in the end ...
 It is the dying that console the living.
 As planes go down, the truth is really this:
 Of all of us—weeping, alive, or falling—
 The falling feel their gravity the least.

Dr Zavalishina is a family physician practising in Toronto, Ont.

Competing interests
 None declared

