

POETRY | SPRING 2021

Four A.M.

By Albert Leung

Boston, February 1990

Nitro, nitro, morphine.
Third time tonight I have been called to see you.
You told me about your grandkids, the cannoli, of being called a WOP.
They said you are a cardiac cripple.
I make sure you are DNR.
Please go to sleep.
I am dead tired.

Taipei, January 2017

I wet your lips.
Only the second time we have been together, alone.
The first time, you asked me about my finances, and to take good care of your daughter.
She told me you are a fighter.
I hold your hand, arthritic, cold, stiff.
Please rest, the battle is over.
Please rest in peace.

Chicago, June 2019

I turned off the feeding pump, for the last time.
We spent the day in the sun, your first time this year.
You told me you are ready, you who gave me life.
I told you I do not want you to leave, but it is time.
I make sure you stay warm.
Your peace, gives me strength.
Sleep well, in the eternal light.

Albert Leung is a physician-scientist who has drifted away from patient care over the last two decades, drawn more by the science than the art of medicine. Having experienced the illness and death of several loved ones in recent years, he sometimes wonders whether his career would have taken a different path if he had these experiences earlier in his life. This is his first attempt at writing poetry and first non-scientific writing published.

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