

The Hallways of My Mind

by Janet Speer

At the end of the day, I put away my chaplain notebook and gather my belongings.
I'm exhausted and ready to leave.

I've spent the hours of my day, seamlessly moving from one patient room to the next through the hallways of the hospital, not stopping to absorb what I'm hearing, seeing, smelling, sensing, or feeling.

It's only later...while driving home...or maybe even later...when I lay down in my bed,
that I allow my mind to wander back to the events of the day.

I begin to walk back through the hallways of my mind. Walking floor by floor, room by room.

There, I see in their faces...
fear, of not getting better
relief, that someone has come and prayed for them
a forced smile, as an attempt to accept the unacceptable prognosis

There, I hear their voices...
saying things like, "No need to pray for me anymore"
or, "I don't know what God is trying to teach me through this"

There, I feel the touches...
hands held tightly in prayer
a hug from a desperate spouse
sweat built up from wearing a mask, gown, and gloves during a visit

There, I smell the odors...
the excretions of a person that just died
the aroma of a bone marrow transplant

There, I feel the brunt of raw emotion...
a fist banging against the window
a mixture of screaming and crying
a crowded room filled with a deafening silence

In the hallways of my mind, I
repeat prayers
pay my respects
reflect on life
remember
feel
cry
let go

The hallways of my mind are a sacred space where the Spirit abides with me and ministers to my soul.
After my time there, I'm renewed and ready to return to a role I hold dear—chaplain.