

FLO'S LAMP

Bedpans and foley bags; side-rails
Up for safety, down for service;
Attending humanity and fragile flesh
Tilted in the balance of earthly sojourn;
Assessing, intervening, charting the tilt:
Familiar round and routine of the nurse.

Coldness can enter there: I've seen it—
Loud ungentleness and coarse humor,
Rhetorically excused as normal coping;
Home-burdened real-lives are brought
But borne behind professional smiles,
Because genuine heart concern
Might snap the loaded camel's back.

Where is your Lamp, Flo?
We need its warmth again. . . .

Nightingale sang songs that echoed,
Carried light in her bosom from the Light,
Held high the Lamp to illumine our future,
Propagating love for hurting humanity.
Inspired by Love from the Suffering God,
She saw beyond the bed the open door,
Saw the soul and spirit beyond the dust.

Sing, Flo, sing again, and lift the Lamp!
No . . . not now your task, but ours.

You made science the tool, not the rule,
Hallowing the Lamplight with your steps,
Used protocol and order to dispel the dark
Of careless care and proud tradition,
Shamed even doctors from lazy habits.

Borrowed light abounds now, overgrown,
Reflected, not glowing from within.

Lift, Flo, the Lamp you held and heeded!
We need His burning brilliance in our hearts!
No . . . not your task, dear sister, but ours.

— *David L. Hatton, 10/13/1998*