

Penetrating chest — here now

Dissonance screams! The Devil's chord! The flatted fifth!

Sleep shatters – awake! Anger Guilt Fear Focus To arms!

The theater rests uneasy – Static, in suspense. Instruments lie ready As raised hands Anticipate the upstroke. A gurney strikes the threshold.

Ictus!

Silence crescendos to orchestrated chaos!

Prelude

A frozen face stares serene. Disquieting chills ripple from its still form Polarized against the anarchy. We conduct the alphabet once, twice, thrice... Unable to keep the time, The metronome fails –

Allegro con moto

Steel flashes!

A delicate crimson arc Sketched on the cool lifeless canvas, Precise and unwavering.

Delivery of the hollow human soul. The beat struck again by eager hands, Orchestrating the final cadence: A monotonic syllable –

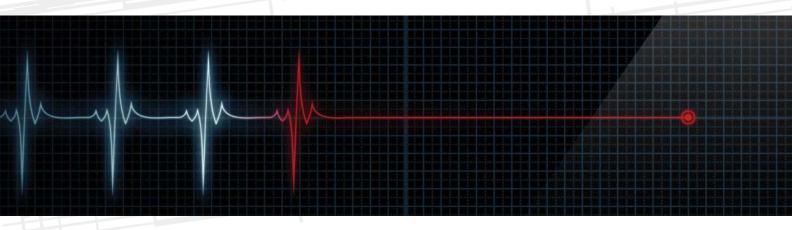
Subito grave Concerned, fearful, stares As the false meter beats on. A rhythm from without, No tempo left within. We await the ritual That we may let this signature cease. The clock ticking no more. Time of death: fin. The tide turns to ebb. Urgency fades to stillness, And I am left alone To undo what cannot be undone, To close an empty vessel. The murderous silence contrasted against the deafening beat of my own vital heart.

Dissonance! A familiar tritone!

Anger Guilt Fear Focus To arms!

No time for rest. No time for tears.

-Sean Stokes, MD



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