



I'm still here:

A patient's notes

I never faint, but I *did*.
Rushed to Emergency, first in line—
a “possible cardiac crisis.”

EKG OK. Maybe it's nothing.
Go home wearing a monitor.
Another faint—this is serious.

Husband rubs my feet, my hands:
precious loving touch before
yet another procedure.

Nurse gives me a welcome,
a perfect IV stick
on a much-perforated arm.

Another consent form to sign.
Risks include *death*—
I sound an “all angels alert.”
After a surrealistic hour
inside an MRI tube,
my sister's flowers calm me.

Heart catheterization;
consideration of ablation;
diagnosis: *ventricular tachycardia*.

Climb onto operating table stool,
turn around, lie down in frigid AC.
I sled down a long icy hill

of twilight sleep through
the valley of the shadow, distant
voices; my skin feels needed.

Later, I'm so glad to wash my hair
it doesn't faze me that a young
male nurse helps me shower.

Home at last with an ICD
(implantable cardioverter defibrillator),
my heart's new rhythmic guardian.

—Nancy Corson Carter, PhD

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