

A physician's lament:

To bear with, to be with, and to bring meaning and hope

This trilogy, *A Physician's Lament: To Bear With, To Be With, and To Bring Meaning and Hope*, emerged from my reflections on the lived experience of medicine: the intimate encounters, the burdens of care, and the enduring human connections that define our work. Across these poems, I sought to explore the balance between suffering and relief, despair and hope, as well as the moral and emotional responsibilities that accompany the practice of medicine.

Each piece considers different facets of the physician's journey: the quiet vigilance of observation, the dialogue between knowledge and empathy, and the creative, reflective spaces that allow us to bear witness fully to human life. Writing these poems has been both an act of personal reflection and a tribute to the generations of physicians, patients, and colleagues whose trust and courage shape the practice of medicine every day.

It is my hope that readers of *The Pharos* will encounter these poems not merely as artistic expressions but as invitations to consider the profound ethical, emotional, and humanistic dimensions of medical practice. The trilogy celebrates the resilience, dedication, and shared humanity of those who care for others, offering a moment of pause, reflection, and hope within the ever-demanding world of medicine.

The gospel of clicks

The screen glows like a shrine,
cursor breathing candlelight,
calling me to kneel
at the altar of ICD and CPT:
each code a verse
from the book of billing.

Pre-authorization is catechism,
scrolling a daily penance,
mouse clicks the rosary beads
counted before I may touch the sick.

Administrators sing hymns to RVUs,
idols polished bright,
while quality of care waits quietly,
barefoot, just outside the door.

I smile with trained irony:
Yes, I will fit a life into a template,
heal in fifteen minutes,
document the miracle afterward.

Then,
the unbilled pause.
A patient's eyes meet mine.
For one breath, the shrine goes still,
metrics loosen their grip,
and medicine remembers
its oldest gospel:
to be present.

The republic of rumor

Welcome to the republic of rumor,
where belief is bartered loudly
and outrage sets the exchange rate.

Here, remedies are sold
alongside conspiracy,
data discounted as elitist,
doubt offered free with every click.

Physicians become pawns
of shadowed councils;
vaccines whispered as plots,
science recast as allegiance.

In this republic, citizens
trust a tweet over a trial,
a headline over history,
certainty over care.

Then—in the exam room—
a mother asks, quietly,
“I don’t know what to believe.
Can you help me?”

The question thins the noise.
I answer slowly, without slogans,
knowing truth travels on foot,
not fiber-optic cable.

Still, it arrives.
And when it does,
it brings what rumor never can:
relief.

Silicon oracles

The machine reads the scan
without blinking,
names patterns with effortless ease,
finds meaning in pixels
before I finish my coffee.

It never tires, never forgets:
a marvel to the ledger,
a challenge to the craft.
They say it will replace us,
those trained to see:
radiologists, pathologists,
dermatologists with flash-card eyes.

But vision is more than recognition.
No algorithm pauses
before bad news.
No circuit feels the weight
of a room gone still.

I welcome the tool,
not as oracle,
but as partner:
let it shoulder the clicks and codes,
the endless remembering.

Let me keep the work
that requires a pulse:
the silence, the listening,
the moment meaning enters the room.

Healing will have room to breathe again.

—David A. Lee, MD, MS, MBA