

This sonnet was written by Malcolm Guite and is to be found in his recent anthology 'After Prayer'.

It is written for an Emergency Room doctor on his retirement, and I share it with you all because it brings to our hearts, minds and fervent prayers the medical teams both here with us in our Health Centres, and also the other doctors and medical teams placed at the sharp interface of dealing with the COVID-19 as it presents itself in the hospitals and emergency wards set up in our country.

The Great Physician

What grace emerges from emergency,
How many births spring from apparent death,
When reassurance calms our urgency
With prayer and skill, restoring life and breath.
You faced the traumas where our fears still lurk
And brought your patients back to home and health,
Their sudden crisis was your daily work
Yet so few knew, for you did good by stealth.
Now we stand back and look along those years:
Hundreds alive and breathing thanks to you!
But you did more than stem the blood and tears;
You sowed a harvest that you never knew
And gently led the patients you made whole
To meet the Great Physician of the soul.

We remember ALL who are part of this pandemic's anti-force; the massive logistical response to the threat of overwhelming disease; the non-medic but essential parts of our fight to save and to prevent this virus from overwhelming our country. We give thanks for them, we pray for them and we pray for all who are now threatened.