Family Medicine Moments
June 16, 2022

I am grateful to Anita Kostecki coming forward with this week's piece. Anita is a graduate of the UMass Family Medicine Residency Program and now works at Boston Medical Center (BMC). She wrote this poem while participating in a Narrative Medicine faculty development course at BMC. It is raw - the way it should be. Shining a light into the darkness of how colleagues faced Covid, alone, and in very different ways depending on their race, age, job position, etc. We can temporarily avoid but we can't dismiss. We need tears, embracement, and reflection to get us through. Thanks Anita.

Crying in Covid

Avoiding the grieving friend, to care for waiting patients
But bracing for it
Inevitable turning towards the pain held down
Her coming to me because it was necessary that we together be

In the face of it
In the middle of it
In the depth of it
Unable to get away from it
Years of sharing our life events unfolding
Did not prepare us for now
We had not imagined such death before old age
Stunned that trying our best was not even close to enough

Joined bodies holding each other tightly without words
Soft fronts hard backs heads bowed
Stinging copious tears arising from our accumulated despair
Crying for and crying from behind fogged masks

For her sister’s dead son
For his 9 yo daughter and her estranged mother
For the injustice of another brown person lost
For the endless flow of mortality unchecked

From the deadly combination of virus with inequity
From the fear of being an experiment
From never-ending fake news
From harshness and misjudgment

Big shuddering wet noises coming from me
Becoming an unfair burden for her
More work for her to do
Work since the beginning of Covid

Triage, test, vaccinate, comfort, witness
Only stay home when told to with Covid
The whole family home now with Covid
And with the space left behind in its wake