

IN THE COOL COOL COOL
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(Sample)

NARRATOR

In the cool cool cool of the afterlife operating room, the cars went zoom zoom crash on highway ninety-five west, and they all breathed deep the fearful lies they weren't afraid to keep.

(ALL breathe in together. ALL exhale together.)

PATIENT

(rising from the table, addressing the audience, upbeat)

I am patient. the patient. must. be. patient. next time. I will not lie. a sunny sunday spent indoors. a christian bookstore. I'll be the manager.

(a moment of reverie, then somberly)

I'll learn how to manage. to get by. without lying.

(Remembering the gaping hole in his stomach, he makes his way back to the table.)

lying with a bullet in my belly.

(The PATIENT lies back down on the operating table.)

NURSE

doctor. we're losing him.

DR HOPPER

I fear you are right. I fear we will lose. him. I fear fear.

NURSE

doctor. hopper. that is your name. and the name of your popper. and your mother. who popped. you came out of the bubble. always troubled. she loved you double. now she's on zoloft.

DR HOPPER

I'm leaving my wife. strife. the death of a lovesong. no more good night sleep tight everything's all right. the kids are home crying. billy is smart. his heart. like a dart.

PATIENT

(looking up at NARRATOR)

"mommy, daddy don't want you? don't want you no more?"

(Pause.)

NARRATOR

in the linen closet the doctor deposits a lifetime of absentee fatherhood dreaming. the linen needs cleaning after all of that creaming. but the linens of the next lingering losing love love-affair line the next shelf.

DR HOPPER

the patient! the patient! clear! baboom. clear! baboom. a tree falls in the forest. baboom. no one to hear.

he's dead. he bled. too much. he's messy. too messy. too dirty. to go home to that house tonight. to move. in the morning.

(An organ quietly begins to wail.)

NARRATOR

(clasps her hands together)

in the mourning.

NURSE

time of death?

(checking her watch)

time of death.

he'll live again. wear nicer sweaters. acrylic.

(DR. HOPPER and NURSE look at each other. They drop their bloody gowns, gloves, and masks to the floor. They take hands. The organ cuts out. They make their way offstage together. The NARRATOR is left bloody beside the dead PATIENT.)

NARRATOR

(watching their exit)

In the cool cool cool of the operating room the doctor walked away when he wanted to run. the patient is dead western medicine lead in the poisonous stream that he drank from his sterile white bubble-boy dream. the families are weeping for what they have lost. they all thought they knew better. but who can know thoughts?

and driving through darkness
on the way home
for the last time
from surgery-sex that day
a crow grazed his saturn
the stars looked away.

the roadkill eat roadkill
the doctors get paid

somebody got eaten
somebody got shot
and somebody got laid.

and somebody's wife
ex-wife to be
read a DR SEUSS book
in a voice sad and sweet
in a small room by the shore.