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POETRY | FALL 2018

## Entering the Sick Room

By Cortney Davis

Smile but do not feign happiness.

Enter with a measured step,  
remembering that you carry news  
of another world.

Be attentive, noting  
the placement of chairs, the presence  
or absence of flowers, of cards tacked to the wall  
as if they might take upon themselves a measure of pain.

Look at the woman resting in bed  
and see the light emanating from her wounds.

Go directly to her bedside, not afraid  
to take her hand or simply sit beside.

You will know when to speak your name  
or if you should wait, saying nothing.

Let her mind and body be all that matters.  
Remain, steadfast,  
while the hospital clock offers its silent hours.

Let this time be sufficient to the task at hand.

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**Cortney Davis, a Nurse Practitioner, is the author of *Taking Care of Time*, winner of the Wheelbarrow Poetry Prize (Michigan State University Press, 2018). Her other poetry collections include *Leopold's Maneuvers*, winner of the Prairie Schooner Poetry Prize, and *Details of Flesh* (Calyx Books). Her non-fiction publications include *When the Nurse Becomes a Patient: A Story in Words and Images* and *The Heart's Truth: Essays on the Art of Nursing*. Davis is co-editor of *Learning To Heal: Reflections on Nursing School in Poetry and Prose* (Kent State University Press 2018). She has received an NEA Poetry Fellowship, three CT Commission on the Arts Poetry Grants, and is an annotator for the NYU Literature and Medicine Database. [www.cortneydavis.com](http://www.cortneydavis.com)**

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