“Your heart rate is 140 on the monitor”, she said. The cause turned out to be a loose monitor lead. After this intrusion, I was unable to get back to sleep. I knew I could not have any more drugs until 1.30 am, so I asked if I could get out of bed. After wandering around in circles for a while, I came across a large bank of screens showing CCU and ward telemetry tracings. There were heart blocks, bradycardias, tachycardias, paced rhythms and evolving infarcts. I noted that I was alive and ticking, although that seemed a mixed blessing at the time. But what was my trace doing up there along with all the others? Were the gods punishing me for something I had written more than 20 years ago?

So, what did I learn from being “on the other side”? Doctors are not immune from illness. Hospitals are dangerous places — avoid them if possible. Selected patients should be given benzodiazepines the moment they walk through the door. Those responsible for unnecessary hospital noise should be taken out and shot. And, after considering the alternatives, I can highly recommend ventricular fibrillation as a way of leaving this world.

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References
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Mr D Duck presented with a painful neck and underwent cervical facet and foraminal injections under computed tomography control. He looks happy with the result, which proves that interventional radiology is not quackery.

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