POETRY

Words of disclosure

You said it was bad
News you had
For me, words to help
Explain my brother's

"Adverse event,"

Said swiftly, to avoid
The heaviness that chased
Those words, to blunt
The news of his

"Unanticipated outcome,"

Your gaze fleeing
Mine, scanning
The ground to find
Relieve from your

"Error,"

With assurance too
Thin and sterile to
Stop fear from escaping
Through your voice.

But I had no
Words, no way to hear
Your careful reasons
For your mistake

When I was stunned
By those foreign words, cold
Against my chest like the first touch
From a searing iron,

Before the questions and even
The confusion; cold before
The heat tunneled through,
drawing out painful breaths.

You said it was bad
But I felt worse,

That despite those words, I couldn't
Feel your regret, your
Humanity beside mine,
Afraid of the moment, but present;

That you disclosed
And informed, even
Discussed the details,
Without "sorry,"

That by your words, I felt
Boxed in and stranded,
With you in that room, but still
Alone.

Joshua Liao MD
Baylor College of Medicine
Houston, Tex.

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