



Query

I just bought a new car. Or rather, the town bought me one. I found it in the park and it followed me home, honest.

One day, I'd had enough. Enough of patients, enough of bureaucratic boobs (local and provincial), enough Electronic Medical Record snares, just plain enough. I suddenly announced it in my office: *I'm leaving*.

I didn't quite know where yet. I was thinking: anywhere. Anywhere would be better than this. Any other place. Elsewhere. When I made my announcement, my tone was a little angry. But that soon changed, and I became excited, even giddy.

Wheee! I felt free.

Waves of people came up to me afterward and asked if it were true, if I were leaving. I enthusiastically told them yes, told them I couldn't wait. That there was an elsewhere and that I was going there. Details were sketchy, but the goal of elsewhere was clear.

My office staff were a little scared. What would they do without me? How would they earn a living? But I'd worried about that long enough. Time to be selfish. Time to move on and let other people make their own adjustments. I'd had *enough*.

That night, in the middle of an angry dispute with my wife — who didn't think it was a good idea to just up and leave while our daughter was in the middle of grade two, who didn't want to find a new job in a new town because she liked the

job she had, who wanted to stay so that she could be near her family — the phone rang. My wife answered. It was the mayor, who asked her: Is it true? She passed the phone to me.

"Yes, it's true, mayor. I've had enough. Enough. Too much, even. I'm packing my bags, I'm going."

He said, "Well, what would it take for you to stay?"

I couldn't believe it. How to answer such a question, after being unappreciated for so long? I felt like shouting, *A bazillion dollars!* and then slamming the phone down. I put him on crude hold with my hand over the receiver, and asked my wife if there was anything she wanted, since the mayor was asking. She told me an extra car, so that we didn't have to elaborately carpool all the time. I told the mayor: a car. He said he'd see what he could do.

Now I drive a zippy little number paid for by the taxes of this burgh, and all I had to do was sign a return-of-service agreement for two years. I call the bitty car "The Car That Medicare Paid For," or *Medicar* for short. I drive it to and from work, and the other doctors in the town are a little upset that I got a car and they didn't. I just tell them: threaten to leave. Then ask for the moon. Then sign the contract.

I'm here for another few years, it seems. How much will be enough, how long before the siren song of somewhere else becomes irresistible? I'm looking forward to the day I can drive there in style in *Medicar*.

— *Dr. Ursus*