

POETRY

A goodbye

A month ago
a long-time patient called my office
to "say goodbye."

He was ill
complicated medically
but not terminal

So I had thought

He needed an intervention —
an IVC filter.
because, while on warfarin,
He had a new leg blood clot

I had worked to get it organized —
but it was taking time

He called my office
a couple times that week
He spoke to my nurse
to find out the status of his procedure

He was anxious.

He called on Thursday.
I was away from the office
He told my nurse to have *Me* call *Him*.
He wanted to say goodbye.

The next day
I called.
He was not home
I spoke to his wife

He had collapsed at home —
a few minutes after hanging up with my nurse
He was in the ICU
He died the next day

I never got to say goodbye
I did find out
that He did not die from the clot in his leg

I guess this is my goodbye.

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