Patient sketches

NO USE FOR THIS FOOT

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“Tell me a story.” I learned the importance of listening closely to the patient from my father, who felt that to be a good doctor meant learning from patients through the stories they shared with him. As an intern at the Royal Victoria Hospital in Montreal from 1975 to 1976, I began sketching and jotting down bits of dialogue as a way to spend more time with the patient, to focus more closely on his or her expression and to try to capture the essence of our encounter. A crucial role of the physician is to identify the patient’s fears and to try to allay anxiety. After all, we also have sat in the patient’s chair.

See other sketches and notes by this author at cmaj.ca.

This sketch and note date back more than four decades.

I have no
use for this
foot except
to put
a sock on

I have no
intention
of ever
running a
100 yard dash

“I have no use for this foot except to put a sock on. I have no intention of ever running a 100 yard dash.” Later in the appointment, he said, “Doctor told me I needed an autopsy, but I said I wanted to wait.”