

# A PERFECT DAY

It's a glorious spring day with a smell of  
Jasmine and Syringa in the air.  
I'm clear eyed. One of those rare uninterrupted sleeps.  
Not a hangover in sight.  
I shave without any interruptions.  
No calls to the phone with a hemi-face of shaving cream drying off  
during my first telephone consultation.

No arguments at breakfast.  
The youngest son is obedient,  
quiet and orderly and does exactly what he is told.  
The phone remains still.

I arrive content and unrushed at the surgery.  
No letters from my accountant,  
no monthly bank statement in the mail.  
It's a perfect day.

None of the receptionists have resigned.  
None are having personal crises.  
The bookings are light and orderly.

My eldest son doesn't ring up to borrow money.  
My second son's housemaster doesn't ring to say  
there is a problem he wants to discuss with me as soon as possible.  
The medical superintendent of our local hospital has no complaints  
and the chemist does not ring all day to query my scripts.  
My wife doesn't ring to say her car won't start.  
It's a perfect day.

No consultations are interrupted.  
The intercom is not working for incoming calls.  
Everything is at hand and working in my room.  
All the files are correct and correspond to the patients seen.

Each patient has an easily solved problem, is  
effusively grateful and leaves a bottle of scotch as a gift.  
No one makes me feel inadequate, complains or is depressed.

It is my afternoon off. There are no push-ins,  
no "doctor, could you just..."  
I leave the rooms contented and relaxed.  
There are no house calls.

At the golf course I play a magic afternoon round.  
My bleep is silent.  
No caddies running breathless from the clubhouse  
with messages to call the hospital.  
The ball never lands in the rough.  
My drives are long and straight.  
Congratulatory comments of admiration come from  
my opponents. It's a perfect day.

The clubhouse is warm and welcoming,  
the beer cold.  
I'm off for the weekend,  
there are no maternities due.  
None of my patients are ill.

I can hear a telephone ringing somewhere.  
It is on my desk.  
"Doctor, do you have a patient with you,  
you are three quarters of an hour behind,  
have you been daydreaming again?..."

— Dr Chris Ellis



drawing by  
Louis Hiemstra

*"No caddies running breathless from the clubhouse with messages to call the hospital..."*

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Published by Academy Publications, a division of Academy of Family Practice/Primary Care South Africa, Johannesburg, 1994