Advice to My Younger Self While Making Evening Rounds

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Es ist Vollbracht, "It is Finished"

—John 19:30

Her son is like a shell found on the beach.
Explaining why he will not survive
(helmets only do so much)
without the Lethe-filled braid of IVs,
remember, his mother is your patient.

Covering for a colleague, when signing out, do not say
"Mr. Jones is not my patient, but..."
On this Friday afternoon
Mr. Jones needs you the same way
fading embers need
a fleeting breeze to reignite.
He is your patient.

Keep up with literature. Gather your ancestry.
Introns and exons are the rosy-fingered dawn
and Achilles heel of our DNA.
You must appreciate this.
Your patients will not.

Looking at a brain MRI—
the tumor extending
from one hemisphere to the other—
reflect on Julius Caesar's resolve
the moment before he crossed the Rubicon.
Your patient is waiting.

On your way home, as November geese
weave the warp and weft
covering a fading sun,
listen to Bach's *Passion According to St. John*.
Someday you will be the patient.

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