

## When Science Isn't Enough

Today is my first patient encounter as a medical student  
I am sitting here across from you as you lay on your left side  
-curled into a fetal position

What's going through your head?

I know I'm giving myself a pep talk  
to have a "natural conversation"

To not be too awkward

To not be too shy

To not be too robotic

To not be too chatty

To actually see you as a person

To see you more than your chief complaint;

More than a puzzle for me to solve

"What brings you in today, sir?"

I inquire, trying to be enthusiastic

"My leg hurts"

You respond dimly

We go into some detail

I am trying to piece together your story

Your leg was amputated because of diabetes

I want to ask why? What happened?

But my colleague has a better question:

"What happened after that?"

"I lost everything"

And with that sentence, I lost a piece of the glory I give this profession

I can't put a Band-Aid on your social problems

I can't cut away your emotional pain

I can't prescribe a magic pill that will...

Today, I have learned that sometimes-

science isn't enough