

Neurology[®]

The most widely read and highly cited peer-reviewed neurology journal
The Official Journal of the American Academy of Neurology



Neurology Publish Ahead of Print

DOI: 10.1212/WNL.000000000201721

Right Brain: You Are Gone

Author(s):

Sojung Kara Park, DO¹

Corresponding Author:

Sojung Kara Park, sojung.park@trinity-health.org

Affiliation Information for All Authors: 1. Trinity Health St. Mary's, Grand Rapids, MI

Equal Author Contribution:

Contributions:

Sojung Kara Park: Drafting/revision of the manuscript for content, including medical writing for content

Figure Count:

0

Table Count:

0

Neurology[®] Published Ahead of Print articles have been peer reviewed and accepted for publication. This manuscript will be published in its final form after copyediting, page composition, and review of proofs. Errors that could affect the content may be corrected during these processes.

Search Terms:

[85] Brain death, Humanities, Narrative Medicine

Acknowledgment:

The author thanks Dr. Aileen Antonio and Dr. Byoungchul Kim for their literary support.

Study Funding:

The authors report no targeted funding

Disclosures:

S.K.Park reports no disclosures.

Preprint DOI:**Received Date:**

2022-09-01

Accepted Date:

2022-11-09

Handling Editor Statement:

Submitted and externally peer reviewed. The handling editor was Ariel Lyons-Warren, MD, PhD.

Abstract

This poem describes the author's experience performing her first brain death examination as a neurology resident. The author hopes this work may prompt readers to reflect on similar experiences. Physicians frequently deal with heavy diagnoses and grave situations. Introspection may inspire empathy and kindness to improve how one provides care for patients and interacts with families.

You are gone

My light meets your eyes
and I stare. *Please, please.*
Your pupils— wide and dark.
What was the last thing
you saw? His little hairs
as blond as yours?
The threads unraveling
from her wrist splint?
Two, three. Gone.

Eyelids held open, I sway
your head left to right,
left to right.
Your eyes are unfazed.
Did they trace him
crawling
before the morning
you woke up cold?
Three, four, six. Gone.

My string of cotton,
wilted and apologetic,
strokes your corneas.
Not the slightest flicker.
When did you last feel
her kiss on your forehead?
Did you get to smile one
more time as you dreamt?
Five, seven. Gone.

Water charges into your ears.
Cold, wet.
There's no give in your eyes.
What was the last sound
you heard?
His crying in the quiet night?
Not her painful weeping,
I hope.
Eight. Gone.

My tongue depressor
brushes your pharynx.
Please gag. You don't.
The vacuum through
your tube is violent.
Just a little cough. Nothing.
Did she have time to memorize
the sound of your voice?
Nine, ten. Gone.

My hammer leaves
your nails pale.
I'm sorry. I'm so sorry.
In your stillness,
I wade through the viscous

space towards her.
I don't need an interpreter
to understand
she is lost.

Ready or not,
you are gone.
Where did you go?
Where will your wife
and little boy find you?

ACCEPTED

Neurology®

Right Brain: You Are Gone

Sojung Kara Park

Neurology published online December 19, 2022

DOI 10.1212/WNL.0000000000201721

This information is current as of December 19, 2022

Updated Information & Services	including high resolution figures, can be found at: http://n.neurology.org/content/early/2022/12/19/WNL.0000000000201721.full
Subspecialty Collections	This article, along with others on similar topics, appears in the following collection(s): Brain death http://n.neurology.org/cgi/collection/brain_death
Permissions & Licensing	Information about reproducing this article in parts (figures, tables) or in its entirety can be found online at: http://www.neurology.org/about/about_the_journal#permissions
Reprints	Information about ordering reprints can be found online: http://n.neurology.org/subscribers/advertise

Neurology® is the official journal of the American Academy of Neurology. Published continuously since 1951, it is now a weekly with 48 issues per year. Copyright © 2022 American Academy of Neurology. All rights reserved. Print ISSN: 0028-3878. Online ISSN: 1526-632X.

