



## Of medicine, metaphors, and war

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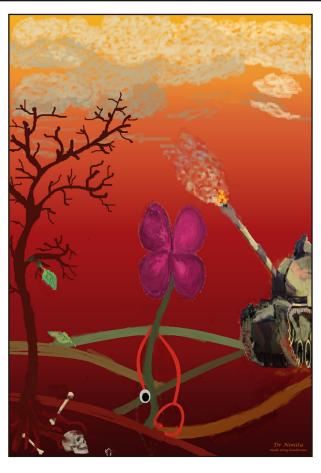
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RHiME Cover, 2024

## Filling the Void

Artist: Dr Nonita Gangwani
Former Senior Resident, Department of
Physiology
University College of Medical Sciences,
Delhi

About the artist:

Dr Gangwani is a medical doctor with multiple sclerosis; and an artist who paints using a head mouse with her laptop. This image too has been created with a head mouse.

A world at war with itself... Why is humankind unkind?

Willingly greedily selfishly without honor or respect it steals

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burns
degrades
uses
abuses
misuses
hoards
resources meant for all

People at war with people produce only pain distress depression panic stress refugees loss hunger poverty malnutrition injury disability murder death sexual violence struggle marginalisation

In the practice of medicine every global health crisis resurrects metaphors of war

"battling COVID"
"fighting an invisible enemy"
"a war on misinformation"
"coordinated attack"
"frontline warriors"

Medicine and War... connected through metaphors disconnected in every other way

The practice of medicine is NEVER like the operation of war

Medicine is NEVER war however connected it may be to urgency aggression criticality emergency strategy intensiveness

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Medicine is compassion War is hate One mends the other rends

Medicine heals minds and bodies it is preventative collaborative humble ethical empowering War is none of these

When the two come together and they invariably do War stoops abysmally low Medicine rises to the impossible task

Medicine rises
despite cruel blockades
and shortages of infra
of personnel, drugs
of scalpels, sutures
It rises
despite an abundance
of danger, of smoke
of fire, chemicals, death
Medicine makes the impossible possible

There are kinder,
more positive,
more humane
metaphors than war
"addressing COVID"
"navigating an invisible challenge"
"countering misinformation"
"collaborative response"
"dedicated professionals"

Words matter Actions matter more

When people are at war with themselves and the world is caught off-guard the healthcare professional steps in and gallantly fills the void.

This editorial is dedicated to all people who make it their life's work to fill the void, but especially to healthcare workers.

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