



I will take off my shoes: the Hippocratic oath reimagined

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On the morning I become a doctor,
I will say the words my teachers said,
and then I will say these:

I will remember that no machine
has ever held a dying hand.

I will understand your phone
is part of your nervous system.

I will be wary of certainty
that arrives too quickly.

I will not pathologize your sadness
if the world is what's sick,
if the news is a wound that never closes,
if there is a war somewhere,
that has re-arranged your sleep.

I will not call your boundaries resistance,
I will assume there is a story behind the symptom
and I will not interrupt it.

I will not mistake your silence for respect,
I will care for you,
and the air you breathe.

And to the ones who came with you,
I see you.
I will not speak past you.
I will not forget
you go home together.

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I will learn the difference
between dedication and self-erasure.
I will not practice medicine afraid,
not of the lawsuit,
not of the voice that taught me,
not of the second look I refused,
because I was already certain.

I will learn to say I was wrong
before harm teaches me louder.

I will not be auctioned to a specialty
by salary, by visa, by queue.
I will not let the map of my training,
be drawn by anyone's anxiety,
least of all my own.

If I leave, I will leave knowing why,
If I stay, I will stay knowing why,
I will not let the industry mistake itself for a calling,
or drown the small voice
that knew why I came here.
I will not mistake what is measurable
for what matters.

I will not forget that the body is a country,
with languages still being written.
I will be suspicious of fluency,
wary of mastery,
and I will keep listening.

I will wear the white coat lightly,
and know when to take it off.
I will remember it is an inheritance,
and a promise,
and never only one.

I will not forget that every patient
is letting me into a room
they did not choose to enter.
I will take off my shoes.

I will believe people find their way back,
slower and stranger,
than the textbook says.

I take this oath
knowing it will be edited
by the doctors who come after me.

I hope it is.