

Poetry

MY ONE GOOD THING

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In this complicated world
of drones
and melting ice caps,
copper mines
and waste heaps,
pipelines, sawmills, and sweatshops

it's hard to know if you can do any good at all.
I mean, real good. Good that outshines
all the bad we do on accident, at least for a
moment.

I think it happened to me once.

I was at the nursing home singing country tunes
to a mean old son-of-a-bitch (by his own admission).
We sat upstairs by the window;
outside the leaves lit green in the spring light, and

Mr. J was still for once, nary a cus.
As he listened, he looked out at the light and the trees,
his eyes still pools, wet, open.

It was only a moment I tipped the balance,
But I've been warming my soul on that day
like a secret ember, ever since.

Benji Perin is a 4th year medical student at the University of Washington. In his preclinical years, he was fortunate to have a service opportunity at Bailey-Boushay House, a skilled nursing facility in Seattle, WA. Learning the quiet lessons of illness and healing from patients at Bailey felt like an antidote for, and certainly a complement to the classroom's anatomy and biochemistry. Outside of school, Benji likes to spend time with family, ride bikes, and write. His work has appeared in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*, the *American Journal of Nursing*, and the *British Medical Journal: Medical Humanities*.