



Death by big toe

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A stranger lies beside me bonded in blood
Our condition similar and neither good
We share conversation our hopes and past
Fear and confusion have gripped him fast

A lifetime of travel has taken its toll
Options limited by his liverish soul
Not for him an aggressive regime
But a gentler chemo, less extreme

His treatment waits but no complaint
A big toe infection a surprise constraint
A fatal act a chiropodist intervention
A mortal wound from an unlikely direction

The anti-biotics and chemo conflict
The latter suspended the former must be quick
But still the cancer ravages bones and blood
Patiently he waits no time to brood

He lies in anguish weight shed like tears
Appetite has fled replaced by fears
Frailty increases as time passes
Body in retreat from the cancers trespasses

Although not Achilles his fate is sealed
He does not recover will not be healed
And here I am health restored
My sadness and guilt cannot be ignored