

“The Window” by G.W. Target

Two men were confined to a hospital room due to their illnesses. One man had to lie on his back at all times; the other had to sit up for one hour every day because of the accumulation of fluid in his lungs. His bed was next to the only window in the room.

Each day for one hour, he would describe to the man in the hospital bed what he saw out the window. The man in bed began to live for that hour; his roommate spoke of the beautiful lake down below, describing the fishermen and the results of their efforts. Another day he described the skyline of the city on the horizon and the busy lives of the people living there. Mountains in the distance, capped with snow were reported on other days. And so the months and seasons passed with these two men.

Eventually, the man confined on his back began to resent the reports from the window. He was ashamed to admit it to himself, but it didn't seem fair that his roommate had a window by his bed. In time, this resentment turned to anger, and then bitterness. One night he was awakened by the coughing of the man next to him, desperately needing to clear his lungs. He looked over and saw him stretching to reach the call button for the nurse. It would have been easy to push his own call button, but he didn't. He chose to offer no help, and in a few moments the coughing ended. It was replaced with labored wheezing, and finally . . . silence.

A few hours later the nurse discovered that the patient by the window had died during the night. His body was removed from the room and the other man said quietly, "Since I am now alone in this room, may I have my bed moved where I can look out the window?"

The nurse agreed, and after the bed had been moved and he was alone in the room again, he summoned all his strength to pull himself up on his elbows. At last he would see all that awaited him outside *his* window.

It was then that he made the discovery— outside the window there was nothing except a brick wall.