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## Poems by doctors

### Dead Certainty

Roy Salole

As a child I was asked what I wanted to be,  
‘A doctor,’ I said without thinking.  
I could not perceive  
the death beyond my childish horizon.  
Now a man, my limits are shrinking  
all around, as death closes in.  
Through my stethoscope I hear death’s rattle  
my rubber hammer falls from my hands  
in battle; at each skirmish I lose  
death raises a cheer;  
though I cannot but leer  
at his magnificent finality.  
‘You are a bad loser,’ he says, adding  
‘Why take sides against  
dead certainty.’

Roy M. Salole was born in Aden, South Yemen. He studied medicine in London and practises psychiatry in Ottawa. This poem is from *The Naked Physician: Poems about the Lives of Patients and Doctors*, edited by Ron Charach (Quarry Press). Reprinted by kind permission of the author.

Chosen by Femi Oyeboode.

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