

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

A Nurse in the Time of COVID-19

R. Daniel Foster · Wednesday, May 27th, 2020

A note to begin

This particular nurse loathes the ?????? emoji (I agree, it can start to feel cheap) so I'm hoping you can add a note of appreciation far beyond that easy gesture.

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Many mornings we talk after his night shift and we also take hikes, like the one pictured here. He gives me an earful and at this point that's what he needs. An ear.



A nurse in the time of COVID-19 / Photo: R. Daniel Foster

In ICU where he works, there have been 4-5 deaths a night. I get a snapshot of the shit show — the myriad complications from longer-term COVID patients, the piss-poor PPE, and how medicine has turned instinctual, much like 200 years ago because who knows exactly how to deal with this new disease and its ramifications?

You don't just check into the hospital with COVID-19 and then either die or check out. Not that simple.

As a patient dies, he stands and waits for the last breath, the last heartbeat — a stand-in for family members. It's such a sad yet sacred duty.

Some nights or days (he works 9 shifts straight at times) he'll get an easier patient or two. He calls it "watering plants," as in "I only had to water plants tonight."

I love that.

Here's to watering plants and good outcomes — for each one of us.

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