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SPRING

His shoulders drooped a bit as he took off his white coat, donned his blazer and all-purpose raincoat. It was a long day at the end of a long week. It included the usual patient schedule: myocardial and cerebral perfusion, gallium, hepatobiliary, renal and bone scans. Bone scans to rule out metastatic disease, to evaluate the response of previously identified metastatic disease to a recent course of chemotherapy, and to rule out a stress fracture in an 18-year-old long distance runner with persistent pain in the right pretibial region. Although the x-rays were negative, the referring orthopedist knew the potential value of bone scintigraphy. It was positive for an intense area of increased uptake precisely at the painful location, compatible with an x-ray-negative fracture. The patient was not happy, but the orthopedist was pleased that his suspicion had been confirmed. The nuclear medicine physician was happy that his wares were useful and that the patient would benefit from the hard evidence that she unfortunately had to let up on her training.

All of this was behind him as he walked the length of the corridor to the stairwell, down a flight of stairs, through the lobby and out into the early March evening. The air was damp and mellow, distinctly mellow. For the first time in recent memory, the chill of winter was not in the air.

There was no doubt about it; the air, weather and environment were definitely Spring-like. Yes, there still may be some cold days left this winter. After all, it was not yet Spring. The Earth had not yet reached that spot in its orbit where the days and nights were equal and thereafter the hours between sunrise and sunset would be greater than the hours after sunset until the next sunrise.

Spring! Spring was in the air! Yes, it was definitely Spring! The stresses of the day vanished as he breathed deeply and was refreshed by the Spring evening air. Another Spring had come! The Earth would soon give forth the expected signs of life: the crocuses, the daffodils, the tulips. How wonderful!

There is beauty in the world beyond the pain, the sickness and the dying he experiences every day. He felt renewed and strengthened. His spine straightened. He walked more briskly and a trace of a smile appeared on his tired face. Yes, it is Spring!

Stanley J. Goldsmith, MD
Editor-in-Chief, The Journal of Nuclear Medicine
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