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## Time to Say Good-Bye

### *"Con Te Partiro"*

After five years of wandering in a dense forest, the editor of a respected medical journal had found the entrance to a cave that the wise man in the forest had told him about. Although the cave was quite dark, he entered and took one small step after another. As the wise man had predicted, he soon saw a light at the end of the tunnel. His pace quickened. Before long, he emerged from the dark tunnel.

He was initially blinded by the glare but as his eyes accommodated to the brightness of the world around him, he began to recognize places and people he had not seen for so many years. He was delighted to see his wife and children again. He had missed them, and apparently they had missed him too.

The homecoming was all that he had imagined it would be. Although she had undergone trials and tribulations on her own, his wife seemed not to have changed at all. They seemed to appreciate being together even more than they had before he had disappeared into the dense forest. Perhaps paradoxically, the time apart had amplified rather than diminished their ability to communicate with each other. His children had grown to adulthood. During the five years, all four of them had married and one had had a son, the first grandchild. He was quite pleased with the family's evolution.

He talked to them for a while of the places he had been and the people he had met. He had traveled throughout the United States and had been to The Netherlands, Italy, Austria, Israel, Jordan, Turkey, Switzerland and Japan. He had been invited to China, Mexico, Brazil and Colombia too but had not gone because of scheduling conflicts and the burden of things piling up whenever he was away from his daily activities. He had met many pleasant, interesting people: physicians, scientists and technologists; people who did their work earnestly day after day, caring for patients and using their energies to further the science of nuclear medicine. When they could, these people stole time from their busy schedules to prepare manuscripts to submit to the medical journal. Despite their busy schedules and many activities, many of them also sacrificed evenings and weekends to review manuscripts that he had sent them and others had prepared editorials or review articles for the journal. He was grateful to all of them for the things they had done to make his trip a success.

Although he had begun the experience with great expectations, he had soon developed the perception that he was lost in a dense forest. He realized now that he had come to know more about himself during his journey. It was a strange process; by being lost for a while, he had found more of himself. In the end, he had seen the light and had followed it. Now, the long journey was over. He had come home again.

A haunting song could be heard coming from the stereo system in the next room. It was a duet in Italian and English sung by Andrea Bocelli and Sarah Brightman. It seemed to fit the moment well.

*"Con Te Partiro.*

*Time to say good-bye."*

**Stanley J. Goldsmith**

Editor-in-Chief, *The Journal of Nuclear Medicine*

December 1998