

Medicine

A Hospitalist's Night Shift**Suzanne Marvel***

University of Rochester School of Medicine and Dentistry, 601 Elmwood Ave, Rochester, NY 14642, USA

*: All correspondence should be sent to: Dr. Suzanne Marvel

Author's Contact: Dr. Suzanne Marvel, M.D., E-mail: suzanne.marvel@outlook.comDOI: <https://doi.org/10.15354/si.25.po064>

Funding: No funding source declared.

COI: The author declares no competing interest.

AI Declaration: The author affirms that artificial intelligence did not contribute to the process of preparing the work.

Science Insights, October 30, 2025; Vol. 47, No.4, pp.1979-1982.

© 2025 Insights Publisher. All rights reserved.



Creative Commons Non Commercial CC BY-NC: This article is distributed under the terms of the [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc/4.0/) which permits non-commercial use, reproduction and distribution of the work without further permission provided the original work is attributed by the Insights Publisher.

THE SUN sinks low beyond the west,
While evening gowns the world in rest.
But rest is not the night's design
For those who cross the hospital line.

The clock strikes seven, shifts rotate—
The handoff comes, the notes, the fate.
The day team files their lists away,
And now the night must hold the sway.

A thousand blinking screens await,
Alarms that hum like whispered fate.
The hospitalist pulls on their coat,
With stethoscope, and mental note.

A scan of vitals, charts in hand,
A pulse that dropped, a lab unplanned.
The page comes through—"Room 302,
His pressure's down, his urine's blue."

A grim smile forms, not one of cheer,
But of resolve that conquers fear.
For every call, absurd or grave,
Is one more soul they try to save.

The nurse appears with hurried pace,
A furrow stretched across her face.
"He's confused now, O₂ is low."
"Let's check the ABG and flow."

Into the room with dim-lit screens,
The night begins its haunted scenes.
A face once proud now frail, bemused,
By time, by illness, and confused.

The orders fly—some quick, some wise—
Lasix, fluids, cultures, tries.
The chart reflects the storm within,
While flesh and spirit both grow thin.

No poet wrote of IV lines,
Of rapid codes and enzyme signs.
No sonnet weaves in midnight bleeps,
Or how a hospital seldom sleeps.

Yet here among the sterile light,
Are those who carry on the fight.
Their battlefield is clean, precise—
With whispered wars of breath and ice.

Down hallways long and faintly lit,
With coffee cold and nerves still knit,
They travel room to room in thought,
Each step a story, each breath bought.

In Room 509 a man turns blue,
A monitor screams the patient's due.
The nurse begins compressions hard,
The crash cart's here, the rhythm's marred.

The hospitalist stands in calm,
Calls out the code with healing psalm.
"One milligram—another round.
Check pulse, no breath, let's cycle down."

Chest rises with an airless groan,
The body fights to stay its own.
And then, a rhythm faint appears—
A spark, a blip, a fragile cheer.

The silence drops like snow on skin,
As if the room holds breath within.
And when the pulse returns, though weak,
A tear escapes a seasoned cheek.

Not every night has ends so clear,
Some fade in loss, some cling to fear.
For there are calls that break the soul,
Where time has taken final toll.

A daughter sobs beside the bed,
Her mother pale, her spirit fled.
The hospitalist sits down low,
No wisdom now, just time to show.

She says, "She passed with peace, no pain,"
While holding hands through grief and rain.
No drug can ease a child's despair,
But presence, silence—simply there.

And then it's ten, and more comes in—
A GI bleed, a post-op spin.

A septic shock, a missed ECG,
A psych admit who tried to flee.

The pager chirps, the tempo keeps,
The only sleep is what one dreams.
A bite of food left on the desk,
A swallow missed, a coffee rest.

Yet still they move, a quiet force,
Adjusting meds, re-charting course.
They question every troponin rise,
And weigh each note with wary eyes.

Behind each name there lies a life—
A teacher, lover, mother, wife.
And in the dark, they gently steer
Between the edge of death and fear.

No orchestra would play these halls,
No marble bust in timeless walls.
But still they move through sacred rites,
Through sterile wounds and measured fights.

In elevators filled with thought,
They carry things that can't be taught.
The guilt of error, pride of care,
The quiet doubt that lingers there.

By two A.M., the world is hushed,
The ER slows, the codes are brushed.
And somewhere in the sleeping ward,
A man regains his breath, restored.

A woman wakes to hear the news—
Her lungs are clear, she starts to move.
Another sigh, another cheer,
A thousand truths to hold and hear.

And still, in every subtle breath,
The hospitalist walks with death.
But not to welcome, nor repel,
But recognize it, know it well.

The shift rolls on, the moonlight thin,
The night team works with wearied grin.
The nurses nod with hats askew,
The aides replace the linens blue.

And just before the break of light,
They sign the notes and close the night.
A sigh escapes as dawn appears—
A silent end to waking years.

The day team enters, fresh and bright,
They ask, "How was the shift last night?"
The hospitalist just shrugs and says,
"Not bad—some codes, some meds, some beds."

No trumpet sounds, no flag is raised,
No medals hung, no praises praised.
But in the quiet turning earth,
They've witnessed death, and guided birth.

They've stood between the edge and shore,
Where healing walks with something more.
And when they leave and shed the coat,
Their name unknown, their tales remote—

Know this: the lives they've helped to save
Lie breathing, resting, strong and brave.
And though the night forgets them soon,
They shone beneath the sterile moon.

Their work, unseen by daylight's crowd,
Is written in the beating sound
Of hearts restored and breath returned—
Of lives retaught what life has learned.

So, here's to those who face the night,
With notes, with codes, with steady light.
For in the dark, their hands remain—
A steady balm to human pain.

And when the stars fade into day,
They walk back home the quiet way.
Their soul perhaps a little worn,
But proud to serve where life is born.

Their shift now done, their page gone still,
Until the next night bends its will.■

Received: June 26, 2025 | Revised: August 18, 2025 | Accepted: September 20, 2025
